Working for Women? Family Day Care Providers' Social and Economic Experience in England and Germany

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Abstract

Family day care providers operate at the interface of the private and the public. They are self-employed and work at home, yet their 'suitability' to provide childcare is scrutinised by officials and rules and regulations operating on different levels which can restrict their business opportunities. Family day care takes place in a particular cultural context concerning ideas of childrearing and against the backdrop of other childcare and educational provision. The focus of the thesis is the family day care provider, one of the members in the childcare triangle of child, parents and childcare worker.

Previous research was mainly interested in the quality of childcare provided and parents' satisfaction. Here working conditions, such as hours worked, workload, income are examined, as are career prospects. Who are the women who become family day care providers and how do they see their future? The daily routines of family day care providers are examined and possible determinants investigated. However, perceived needs of children may differ from demands arising out of parents' reason for using this kind of childcare service. Family day care providers accounts are examined in order to identify the various aspects of childcare arrangements and how to develop relationships that promote successful arrangements. Since family day care takes place in the home other family members are part of the setting and are affected by their mother's or wife's work. At the same time their contribution to the work of a family day care provider has to be included in the investigation of the working conditions.

The comparison of family day care providers living in two different locations, four local authorities in the Northeast of England and one town in the Northeast of Germany allows the influence of family and childcare policies and the impact of cultural perceptions of good childrearing practices to be traced. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed.

Apart from new insights into the actual working conditions of family day care providers, a better understanding of the intended and unintended effects of policies regulating family day care has been gained. The findings contribute to the debate on paid and unpaid work, and paid and unpaid care, as well as to the debate over equal opportunities, showing a more complicated relationship than just a gendered division.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

No mother of a young child can go out to work without sharing the responsibility for her children. In Britain an increasing number of women are becoming economically active. The proportion of working mothers of children under the age of four years or younger in particular has risen during the last decade (Twomey 2001). While their mothers are out at work most children are looked after by their fathers or other relatives (e.g. Finlayson et al. 1996; Ward et al. 1996; Office for National Statistics 2000; Wheelock et al. 2000). When informal care is not possible or not desired childcare has to be sought in the formal sector. Childminders[1] provide most of the places with suitable opening hours for working parents within the formal sector in Britain (Meltzer 1994; Thomson 1995; Department for Education and Employment 1998; Office for National Statistics 2000).

The availability of affordable childcare has been identified as an important issue for women and children alike. It is crucial for women's access to the labour market, since women continue to be mainly responsible for organising childcare (Brannen and Moss 1991; Crompton 1997; Windebank 1999; Office for National Statistics 2000; Wheelock et al. 2000), or to alleviate poverty of mothers and children (Oppenheim 1993; Piachaud and Sutherland 2001). The Labour Government strives to facilitate women's – particularly single mothers' – participation in the labour market to make them independent from the state (Home Office 1998). One measure under the National Childcare Strategy is the planned expansion of childcare provision in which childminder networks are seen to play an important role, as do single mothers who are envisaged as future childcare workers (Department for Education and Employment 1998). 'Mums' who have been spending time at home with their children are seen especially as potential childminders (Cabinet Office 2001).

Yet when a mother goes out to work problems are perceived, reflecting and confirming gendered roles as prescribed by the 'breadwinner' model[2]. It may be harmful to the child to be looked after by somebody else than the mother or father (Morgan 1997). When this view is rejected in principle the question who is taking care and in which setting is of interest. Again the role of mothers as responsible for and as the main provider of childcare is emphasised (Brannen and Moss 1991; Windebank 1999)

In the eastern parts of Germany (what was formerly the German Democratic Republic or GDR) a reversed trend of women's economic activity has taken place (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a). Unification in 1990 set off a huge increase in unemployment, particularly that of women, and the extensive provision of free childcare in nurseries was scrapped after a short transitional period. However, the application of the West German legal framework to the unified Germany introduced family day care (as childminding is known in the international context) to the new *Länder*. Although some children in the former East Germany had been looked after in family day care, this had not had an official label like '*Tagespflege*' (day care) and women providing this care were not called *Tagesmutter*[3], as in the former West Germany. Official statistics did not provide information about this service or its extent.

Aims

When this project started the growing number of places at childminders in England and Germany (Nolte 1995; Department of Health 1998; Landesjugendamt Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 1998) emerging under such very different conditions implied that this form of childcare can offer a solution to how to reconcile production and reproduction in very diverse economic circumstances. It may be a solution on the household level, or on a wider social level – women supporting each other to be able to earn an income and share childcare responsibilities. However, to embrace family day care as a solution for all women is premature. In outlining the relationship between the people concerned in family day care the term 'exploitation' has been used. It appears that the term is used to express the extent of the disadvantage suffered but not as an application of Marx' general concept of exploitation as that of the extraction of surplus labour from the oppressed class by the ruling class. For example Shaw and Perrons (1995) describe the relationship between better-paid mothers buying childcare services and women providing care has as "women exploiting women" (p. 9). It has to be examined whether this is supported by family day care providers' tendency to self-exploitation due to the fuzzy distinction between domestic and business life as found within entrepreneurial families (Wheelock 1992). This is an important question guiding my study despite claims that it is not only the family day care provider who might be exploited. It has been argued that childminding is exploitative to both providers and users (Ferri 1992), that the system of family day care is

set up to the advantage of the (traditional) German state, the church and men against the interests of (all) women (Emmerling 1994) or that it is to the disadvantage of all individuals directly involved:

> We are ... convinced that childminding is an exploitative provision: that parents are being exploited through their need for day care; that children are being exploited by poor day care provision; and that minders themselves are being exploited by being grossly underpaid for their work. (Trades Union Congress 1978, p. 38)

The aim of the research is to let one component of the family day care triangle consisting of care provider, child and parents: the women providing family day care, the self-employed, homeworking childminders and *Tagesmütter* come to the fore. An assessment of the meaning of family day care for women's equal opportunities or as form of childcare has to include the position of the childminder or the *Tagesmutter* herself[4]. This means highlighting her economic position and possible consequences of this kind of self-employment. It involves gathering information as to which forms this flexible working takes and understanding the working conditions and daily routines of family day care. Best suited to collect this kind of information are questionnaires allowing quantification, for example working hours and income, and provide information representing the working conditions of childminders in the Northeast of England and *Tagesmütter* as they develop in one town of the former East Germany.

To look at family day care providers and their work presents us with a microcosm of contradictions and a variety of relationships. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* engage in paid self-employment at the same time as they take on the role of mother and housewife. Their activities may comprise providing paid care for other people's children and unpaid care for their own at the same time. It also includes that they have to define the care provided for other people's children and their relationships with parents of these children. They are self-employed but respective legal frameworks and their implementation restrict business opportunities. The description of the work of a family day care provider is so challenging because the boundaries between her paid work and her unpaid, domestic work are fuzzy. The common sense boundary between the private and the public, the front door on the spatial level and between formal and informal care on the level of

obligations are disputed. Other interests have to be considered: Social Services and the *Jugendamt*[5], family members, other childminders or *Tagesmütter* and perhaps members of a childminding association become involved in the construction of family day care. Although surveys may enable to trace prevailing contradictions and possible conflicts the additional use of interviews allows to gain insight into the processes defining family day care from the perspective of the childminder or *Tagesmutter*, of forming appropriate relationships, and the emergence of possible conflicts and their solution.

The process of becoming a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* offers insights into women's lifecycle considerations, the impact of women's traditional role as mother and housewife and their position in the labour market. It needs to be examined whether the choice of becoming a family day care provider is largely influenced by the wish to meet expectations and commitments arising out of being a mother and have to be examined in connection with life-course decisions, or whether other driving forces are at play. This question gains importance when comparing women in England and in the former East Germany because it cannot be assumed that a shared definition of motherhood exists. A definition of motherhood primarily in terms of the needs of children where Bowlby's views (1953) inform parents may be applicable to contemporary West European countries (Brannen and Moss 1991; Wheelock and McCarthy 1997) but fits less perspectives accepted in (former) socialist countries. A comparison drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from the Northeast of England and Rostock in the unified Germany aims to describe the structures of constraint (Folbre 1994), reflecting economic, political, cultural and psychological constraints on women's lives on the sites of family, labour market and society.

Prevailing cultural values about parenting, employment and childcare are informed by and translated into policies. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* work within the wider context of available support and services for families but also within a definition of family day care as prescribed by the respective legal and policy frameworks. The comparison between the English and the German framework is particularly suitable to trace the intended and unintended effects of these on childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

Cultural values and social ideas of what children need, what parents can offer and the role childcare workers ought to take on permeate childminders' daily work. These processes remain largely invisible as long as the involved parties agree. That different views may be held is often revealed in conflicts between family day care provider and parents or

conflicts between family day care provider and Social Services or *Jugendamt*. The comparison between German and British practices of family day care are particular useful in revealing cultural values about childrearing and childcare.

Approach

Exploring the microcosm of the social and economic contradictions of family day care demands a two-fold approach. On one hand a description of the working conditions of family day care providers is overdue. How many hours do they work? How much income can they earn? How many children are in their care? This calls for quantitative methods. An attempt to answer these questions will quickly run into difficulties due to the fuzzy boundaries between the public and the private, the paid and the unpaid work of a family day care provider. The task is to clarify definitions of working time and income that allows comparing family day care providers working conditions.

Family day care providers' economic behaviour cannot be examined ignoring the context in which the decision to work as a childminder or *Tagesmutter* or to continue in this kind of self-employment takes place. The role of the state and intentions and effects of social institutions have to be included. The decision to work as a family care provider is embedded in values and norms as they develop within the culture and find expression in institutions. It calls for a holistic approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. To explore the social and economic experience of family day care providers also calls for an approach that is not tied stringently to one discipline.

Timeliness

Since the start of the research the number of registered childminders and the number of places available at childminders in England have declined. At 31 March 2000 an estimated 75,600 childminders were registered to provide 320,400 places, representing a fall of approximately 26 per cent of registered childminders and a fall of approximately 15 per cent of registered places since 1996 (Department for Education and Employment 2000b)[6]. However, despite the continuous increase of places in day nurseries, childminders still provide the majority of places in formal childcare. Day nurseries provided 264,200 places at 31 March 2000 (Department for Education and Employment 2000b). The provisional estimates of children's day care facilities at 31 March 2001 show a further decline of childminders and places at childminders, and the continuing trend of

rising numbers of places in day nurseries and Out of School Clubs (Department for Education and Skills 2001a).

The falling number of childminders is a serious setback. After all, "childminders are key to the success of the National Childcare Strategy" (Department for Education and Employment 2000a, webpage) and they offer formal, private sector childcare at the lowest price (Daycare Trust 2001). Several measures have been set up to halt the decline of this form of childcare provision. New childminders can receive a start-up grant of between £50 and £600 (Department for Education and Employment 2000a). In March 2001 the Government pledged £3.5 million to provide temporary assistance to childminders working in deprived areas by providing grants of up to a £100 a week to help them through financial difficulties. This kicks in if a vacancy could not be filled for two weeks or over and can be paid for up to five weeks (Department for Education and Employment 2001a). Additionally childminders are envisaged to provide more than just childcare services. The government announced a pilot scheme in which a teenage mother can make use of up to 16 hours free childcare at a childminder if she stays or enters full-time education or training. This is connected to training up to NVQ Level 3 and a payment of the minimum wage per hour per child to the childminder (Department for Education and Employment 2001b).

In contrast to the development in England the number of children placed with a *Tagesmutter* in Rostock where the German part of the research took place continued to rise (Hansestadt Rostock Amt für Statistik und Wahlen 2000a; b). This is due to the restructuring of the labour market in the new *Länder* so that woman had to adapt to insecurity arising from the change to a market economy. It includes expectations that the labour force shows considerable flexibility and with it the need for more flexible childcare provision. But also women have had to adapt to the new insecurity arising from the abolition of the right to work and the ending of free, state-subsidised childcare. Family day care is seen to be able to fill gaps occurring.

The development of family day care in the new *Länder* of Germany holds relevant information for family day care in general. In the *Länder* of the former West Germany family day care has been and continues to provide the most important paid childcare service for children under kindergarten age. The fragmentation of provision and support by public policy due to the federal structure makes the experience of *Tagesmütter* in a Land with firstly high levels of other childcare provision and secondly with *Land*-laws

that guarantee childcare subsidy payable to the provider interesting. It is nevertheless notable that childminders and *Tagesmütter* have in common that they are constructed as gap-fillers for a lack of childcare provision.

Why we don't know enough about family day care

Family day care – looking after other people's children in one's home for pay – is at least as old as the industrial revolution. Engels observed in 1845:

> [F]or when the wife spends twelve or thirteen hours every day in the mill, and the husband works the same length of time there or elsewhere, what becomes of the children? They grow up like wild weeds; they are put out to nurse for a shilling or eighteen pence a week and how they are treated may be imagined. (Engels 1975, p. 406)

Engels continues by blaming the high accident and death rates among children on working and living conditions that forced parents to neglect their children. There is also a reference to who the childminders were. Engels cites the Factories' Inquiry Commissions' Report, identifying the childminders as

> Some little girl or aged woman, who is hired for a trifle and whose services are equivalent to the reward (Engels 1975, p. 440)

Engels shows interest from all three perspectives, that of the child, the parents and the childminder. The concern about the quality of care offered by family day care providers continues to be the main area of interest in Britain as in Germany.

The impetus for family day care as it has now developed – recognised by law and regulated, and with pedagogic content – took place in both countries in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. In Britain growing concern with children at childminders and the recognition that not a lot was known about it spurred research into childminding. In West Germany an article in the women's magazine *Brigitte* in 1973 referred to the Swedish model of family day care and demanded a new occupation '*Tagesmutter*'. It triggered the demand for better recognition and support of family day care providers in Germany and emphasised the need for a better understanding of the effects of family day care on children. In both countries a family day care association was established. In Britain

groups of childminders formed during the action research connected with Brian Jackson initiated the foundation of the National Childminding Association in 1977 (Jackson and Jackson 1979; National Childminding Association 2001b). Similarly in Germany *Tagesmütter* involved in the pilot scheme '*Tagesmütter*' founded the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Tagesmütter, Bundesverband für Eltern, Pflegeeltern und Tagesmütter* in 1978 (working group for *Tagesmütter*, federal association for parents, foster parents and *Tagesmütter*) (Trimpin and Bauer 1996). A more recent development in both countries has been the introduction of a new legal framework regulating family day care. In Britain the Children Act 1989 and in Germany the *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* (*KJHG*, The Child and Youth Services Act, Social Code Book VIII) came into force January 1991. The German development included that this new law was applicable in all *Länder* of the unified Germany.

Research on childminding

Over time the interest in childminding has changed. The pendulum swung from the sounding of alarm bells in the later 1960s, the early 1970s warning about the atrocious conditions for children at childminders and the fear that unregistered 'back-street minding' would produce every year eventual 'unemployables', to the realisation in the late 1970s that in the then prevailing economic and political climate childminding was here to stay (Bruner 1980). In the decade from the mid 1970s the largest body of research and literature on childminding was published. The focus of interest was on the quality of childcare offered. Some research looked only into childminding (Mayall and Petrie 1977; Jackson and Jackson 1979; Bryant et al. 1980; Shinman 1981). Other research compared the quality of different forms of childcare provision (Trades Union Congress 1978; Bruner 1980). Moss (1987) provides an overview of the research on childminders in Britain emerging from this period.

Another source of information about the working conditions of childminders can be found in the literature about parents' use of childcare provision and their satisfaction with various childcare arrangements (Bone 1977; Meltzer 1994; Thomson 1995; Ferri and Smith 1996; Finlayson et al. 1996). Sometimes childminders find entrance into literature about homeworking (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995; Salmi 1996) or in the consideration of the urban labour market (Webster and White 1997a; Webster and White 1997b) and a regeneration project (McArthur 1999).

Let us look more closely at the three main pieces of empirical research published in the late 1970s. Sonja and Brian Jackson and their colleagues conducted open and action research over a period of 14 years mainly in Manchester and Huddersfield. Their extensive work is drawn together in *Childminder: a Study in Action Research* (Jackson and Jackson 1979). Berry Mayall and Pat Petrie (1977) analysed material on 40 children, 39 childminders and 28 mothers in London. Bridget Bryant, Miriam Harries and Dee Newton (1980) studied a sample of 165 childminders – of whom 66 were active – in Oxfordshire.

The authors of these pieces of empirical work had in common that they felt alarmed by the quality of childcare they found. The physical conditions of the place where children spent their day, the fitness or the suitability of the childminder herself, the physical care received by the children and the quality of communication between childminder and children, and childminder and parents were the main areas of concern. As far as these studies allow an insight into working conditions of childminders in the 1970s childminding was a job entailing long hours, negligible pay and insecurity. However, the main motivation to conduct research into childminding was the concern about children. The general conclusion was that childminding as it was found in the late 1970s had an unfavourable effect on children and it was feared that it would increase maladjustment in the generation exposed to it (Bruner 1980, p. 127). Serious worries about the short-term and long-term effects on children collided with opinions that saw the advantages in childminding as the "most economical form of support" for working mothers (Central Policy Review Staff 1978, p. 28), that depicted the childminder as 'proxy-mother', as expressed by Lady Plowden on the Sunningdale Conference in 1976 (Bruner 1980). Childminding was seen as not having the drawbacks of the care provided in a day nursery, for example a lack of attention given to individual children and the difficulties for children to get their bearings in larger groups (Leach 1979). Between full-hearted approval of family day care (Leach 1979) and fierce rejection viewing good quality of childcare on the cheap as impossible (Trades Union Congress 1978) a variation of opinions could be found, expressed in a variety of suggestions as to how to improve childminding.

The policy agenda for improving childminding in Britain at the end of the 1970s

Improvements were suggested on the general level of family policies addressing the factors that push mothers of young children into the labour market, but also on the level of registration and inspection, support offered to childminders including training, improvement of working conditions and in locating childminding within a wider net-work of childcare services. Most optimistic about achieving the reforms were Sonia and Brian Jackson. Their vision entailed an improved system of registration connected to insurance coverage for childminders and training, an extension of lending schemes for toys and safety equipment, the setting up of centres where childminders can meet, the development of back-up panels (supply childminders available on short notice), weaning childminding away from the market via recommended rates of pay and thinking of turning childminding into a salaried service, supported by the employment of meals-on-wheels and domestic services to childminders (Jackson and Jackson 1979). Mayall and Petrie (1977) forwarded similar proposals. However in their opinion training could be done easily and quickly. Childminders should become part of the local authority's work force, being closely connected to and trained in day nurseries (Mayall and Petrie 1977).

These suggestions were heavily criticised by Bryant, Harris and Newton (1980). Their critique highlights the conflicts and dilemmas childminders, parents, children and policy makers encounter. Looking at the request for more training of childminders they remark that many childminders do not seem to be interested. Also the expressed interest in health and safety issues does not necessarily improve the quality of the daily care children receive. What had been called training was often little more than a get-together with some discussion, but provided childminders with an aura of 'professionalism' which they did not merit and which would be misleading to parents. Additionally there was no evidence that training resulted in better care. Jackson and Jackson (1979) themselves report that a training course in Brixton did not result in any improvement of the quality of care that could be measured six months after the course had finished. Nevertheless, even researchers with a more positive evaluation of the quality of childcare offered by childminders saw training as essential. It would allow getting rid of poor minders (Davie 1986) and be tailored to women who would like to take a professional role and to women who are home centred without career aspirations (Shinman 1981).

Whilst researchers called attention to the minimal pay childminders received (see Moss 1987), this did not seem to be an issue for the childminders themselves. Childminders

appeared more interested in being appreciated by parents rather than being taken for granted (Bryant et al. 1980). Perhaps some improvement could be achieved by financially rewarding childminders who paid more attention to children and offered better quality of care than other childminders. Yet, in the context of 'haphazardly' arranged rates of pay and mothers' lack of knowledge of their children's experience it seemed to be very unlikely that a system rewarding better care could be established. Researchers continued to ask which rate of childminders' pay should correspond to, for example, the rate of baby-sitters or the rate of cleaners. However, one team of researchers suggested that an increase of charges demanded by childminders could push parents towards the use of illegal, unregistered childminders (Bryant et al. 1980).

The proposal to set up centres for childminders or the organisation of back-up panels was criticised, too. Bryant, Harris and Newton (1980) wrote that children may feel distressed by yet another surrounding and an increasing number of new people to cope with. Additionally they feared that the meeting of childminders and their children in centres would result in even less attention given to children. The organisation of back-up panels may encourage childminders to send the children in their care to one of the replacement childminders, even if there is no emergency and so cause undue stress to the children (Bryant et al. 1980).

The researchers of the Oxfordshire study suggest improvements in the daily work situation of the childminder. Childminders and parents should be encouraged to allow for a settling in period, the childminder should visit the children's homes, children should be allowed to bring something from home and have a corner or a drawer or something similar at the childminder. Openness between childminder and parents needs to be promoted. Childminders would have to learn to watch out for 'quiet' children and other problems children may encounter. A reduction of housework done by the childminder would be beneficial. These improvements at the level of the childminders' work ought to be embedded in an overall control of childminders, including records of breakdowns of arrangements and an observation of children's development (Bryant et al. 1980).

Taking up the findings of the Oxfordshire study and comparing that with the studies of other childcare provision Bruner (1980) extended these suggestions. In his view the establishment of childminding teams, with a visiting childminder demonstrating good practice would improve the quality of childminding. The visiting childminder should have

access to an advisory and referral system, allowing them access to professional knowledge (Bryant et al. 1980).

In the late 1980s the aspect of the impact on training on childminders has been the focus of a small-scale study by Ferri (1992). She concluded that the most important contribution training could make is to equip providers to deal effectively with the difficult adult relationships, which the individual negotiation and interaction inherent in childminding create. This would be supported if the formal aspect of childminding arrangements were removed from the sphere of private negotiation between caregiver and parent and family day care turned into a publicly regulated day care service (Ferri 1992).

Although previous studies provide some insight in the working conditions of childminders, this information is rather a by-product. Since the focus was almost entirely on the quality of childcare on offer or on homeworkers in general, the results highlighting childminders' working conditions are sketchy and difficult to compare. This and the fact that most of these studies are small-scale projects render it difficult to assess how representative the information about childminders' working conditions is. Additionally most of the research on childminders took place before the Children Act 1989 came into force. Therefore research from the childminder's perspective is called for that is able to accommodate the changes in the legal framework as well as the changes in women's labour market participation.

Family day care in Germany

The impetus for family day care in Germany came from an article with the title "*Wir fordern einen neuen Beruf: Tagesmutter*"(We demand a new occupation: daymother) in the women's magazine *Brigitte* 1973. It reported on the Swedish model of childminding, employing women to look after children in their homes. In Sweden these women are called *dagmama* (daymother) (Blüml et al. 1977; Trimpin and Bauer 1996). At this time in Germany, as far as family day care was recorded, it was part of foster care, falling under the same regulations and being administered by the same department of the *Jugendamt*. Family day care played only a tiny role as did foster care on a weekly base (children going home at weekends), compared to 24 hours, seven days a week foster care (Tietze et al. 1993). The article triggered a public discussion. Imitating the Swedish name, it was hoped to transmit some of the different perspective towards the care of young children in somebody's home. The supporters of the establishment of *Tagesmütter* hoped

to achieve two things. They intended to address the bottleneck of childcare provision and they wished to establish a new profession. Opposition to this move came from paediatricians fearing negative effects on children's health (Hassenstein 1974), and the interpretation of Bolwby's work (1953), that saw the development of children's essential bonding with their mother endangered, leading to long-term damage. Others feared that public support of childcare provision would give *Tagespflege* the status of a long-term solution, encouraging young mothers to take up paid employment, resulting in their failure to recognise their role as mother. A development in this direction would contribute to the deterioration of the family (Meves 1976).

The pilot scheme '*Tagesmütter*'

Consequently the *Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit*, the ministry responsible in those days, instructed the *Deutsche Jugendinstitut* to carry out the pilot scheme *'Tagesmütter'*. The purpose was to find out if and to what extent the implementation of *Tagesmütter* positions could develop and support the existing (low) childcare provision for working mothers (Blüml et al. 1977). The pilot scheme took place between 1974 and 1977 at eleven different locations in West Germany. In each location between 15 and 20 *Tagesmütter* formed a group. One full-time and one part-time advisor supported this group. Additionally a supply *Tagesmutter* was employed to stand in for *Tagesmütter* of this group in emergencies or was not able to care for children due to sickness. Each *Tagesmutter* looked after one or two children. The *Tagesmütter* participating in the pilot scheme agreed to work within the scheme the whole period of three years and to look after particular children for at least one year. They received a fixed amount of money according to the number of children they looked after. Parents contributed to the costs as well with a fixed sum per child. In order for women to participate in the pilot scheme as *Tagesmutter* they had to show a general willingness to work closely together with the parents of the children and to take part in the fortnightly group sessions as well as in four weekend seminars per year. These meetings were for *Tagesmütter* and advisors only. Here *Tagesmütter* could exchange experiences and receive training. The study group published an interim report 1977 and final report 1980 (Blüml et al. 1977; Blüml et al. 1980).

It is to be noted that *Tagesmütter* and parents did not participate in the development of the framework of the pilot scheme (Blüml et al. 1977). It had to a considerable extent the

character of an experiment by specialists, focusing on the quality of childcare provided in a domestic setting and the effects on children. One of the starting points for the researchers was their opinion that multiple care arrangements as such did not damage children. Within the pilot project it was possible to control some of the variables believed to influence the quality of care. Another important influence on the framework of the pilot scheme arose from the objective to research the effects of family day care on children. A breakdown of childcare arrangements had to be avoided, for a group of children spending time with a *Tagesmutter* were to be compared with a group growing up solely in the care of her family.

The pilot scheme *'Tagesmütter'* cannot provide us with information on how family day care providers' working conditions developed in the free market in Germany. It was more likely to reflect ideas about how family day care could be organised held by policy makers on federal and regional level and staff of the *Deutsches Jugendinstitut.* This specific lack of information about working conditions is also attached to later, similar pilot projects and to pilot projects that, as it happened in some *Länder*, employed *Tagesmütter.* These projects all had in common that they depended on additional funding for training, supervision and support to cover costs which are not met by parents and subsidy of childcare with public money. Since the pilot scheme put family day care on the agenda of policy makers and women, family day care has developed in many different directions. *Tagesmütter* can work in their home or in the child's home. Children may be in her care for some hours a day or they may stay over night (Schymik 1996). The arrangement may be a contract between *Tagesmutter* and parents, or it may involve the *Jugendamt*; or an association may employ a *Tagesmutter.* Existing provision, regulation and support of family day care and the involvement of the relevant *Jugendamt* varies considerably in the 16 *Länder* (Tietze et al. 1993; Walter-Smets 1996). Attempts to draw together results of various, often very small scale studies have to be treated with greatest caution because they are not representative for any other area in Germany and conditions may change quickly over time.

Available research findings of family day care in Germany concentrate on the form it takes in West Germany. Information representing working conditions of *Tagesmütter* as they emerge outside heavily subsidised pilot projects are scarce and not applicable to the working conditions emerging in one of the new *Länder* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Research from the perspective of the *Tagesmutter* in the context of unification of

Germany and the conditions provided by the interpretation by the *Land* are called for. It is important that here *Tagesmütter* are researched who are not tied into a pilot scheme manipulating working conditions in order to secure the collection of data.

Readers' guide

What are the economic and social experiences of family day care providers? This question seeks answers from the perspective of the provider of childcare for other people's children. The characteristics of family day care – it is taking place in the home of the childminder or *Tagesmutter*, it is constructed as self-employment but bound by a tight regulative framework, it offers care for children paid for by their parents and it is almost entirely a micro-business set up by women – indicate the relevance of a variety of theories, concepts and policies. The work of a family day care provider challenges the construction of the boundaries between the private and the public, whether they are seen as the dichotomy of private home – public work and policy or whether they are seen as the dichotomy of private market – public policy (Jennings 1993).

The decision to become a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* is a step taken by individual women but also in the context of the household. The location of the work and its nature suggest that not only the decision of becoming or continuing to provide day care has to examined on the household level but the work itself, too. However, the choice of becoming a family day care provider can only be understood in the context of the structures of constraint (Folbre 1994). The complex structures of constraint on women's lives provide an analytical framework for gendered divisions on the sites of labour market and family and decisions taken concerning paid and unpaid work. It invites one to look at concepts of work and care and helps to analyse, for example, how the roles housewife, mother or childcare worker are constructed. An important part of the structures of constraint are policies influencing individual and household decisions concerning the combination of paid and unpaid work. Changing policies in England and the consequences of unification in Germany have led to an interesting shift between the perception of women as 'citizen-the-carer' or as 'citizen-the-worker' (Berghahn 1993; Lister 1999).

The comparative approach taken has two purposes. On the one hand it was triggered by my inquisitiveness as social scientist. The opportunity to capture the effects of German unification on women's lives is a unique chance to gain insights into the interplay of

policies and attitudes. On the other hand comparative studies have great analytical power by revealing similarities and differences of social phenomena in different contexts. The comparison of childminders living and working in the Northeast of England and *Tagesmütter* living and working in the Northeast of Germany in one of the new *Länder* crosses national and language boundaries. Chapter 2 expands on the challenges presented by the comparative character of this piece of research and highlights, theoretical implications and the role of the researcher in this exciting task.

Chapter 3 sets out the context of the research. The examination of the social and economic experience of family day care providers has to be grounded in the structures of constraint (Folbre 1994) women face when making decisions about, for example, reconciling production and reproduction. The ambiguous position of family day care in the concepts of public and private invites one to look at the constructions of boundaries as forwarded by economists and sociologists. Discussions surrounding the boundaries between the public and the private are a good starting point for exploring the concepts of domestic, unpaid work and the concept of care. These concepts are crucial in analysing women's private roles as housewives and as mothers, and may be decisive in defining the role of family day care providers. Yet the gendered divisions within the household or the family has to include the relationship between paid and unpaid work. This can be approached from the position of women in the labour market or from the position of women within the household. A comparison of recent developments of women's participation in the labour market in England and Germany makes interesting reading and prepares the ground for an evaluation of the development of family day care. Taking as starting point women's position in the household draws the attention to two areas of interest. One is the involvement of other members of the household in women's decision about labour market participation and the division of paid and unpaid work. The other is the contribution women's income makes to the household income and household consumption. Both offer relevant perspectives for the study of childminders and *Tagesmütter*. The last part of the conceptual chapter is the policy context in which family day care takes place. It is interested in policies, supporting mothers and fathers to fulfil their parental responsibilities and to combine paid and unpaid work. Particular attention is paid to the development of childcare provision.

By now it has emerged that the quest for answers about the social and economic experience of family day care providers demands the unravelling of a complex set of

relationships. This is best approached by an examination of family day care providers' work from different angles. Family day care providers are housewives and mothers who want to earn an income and/or who want to work in childcare. They are businesswomen running a micro business. This includes negotiating a business relationship with parents. Family day care providers' daily work demands defining childcare and developing routines, including developing relationships with children in their care. The location of family day care, in the home of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* challenges the commonplace boundary between the public and the private, between paid and unpaid work. This implies that other household members are drawn into the family day care provider's work. The following chapters present the findings of the empirical work. Each chapter focuses on one angle to examine family day care or emphasises one particular relationship.

Chapter 4 asks who are the women becoming childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Against the background of labour market developments and life-course positions it takes a closer look at factors that contribute to taking up this kind of self-employment. On the one hand factors that push women into providing care for other people's children in their home are identified – both in connection to their labour market position and to commitments arising out of their role as mothers. On the other hand pull-factors connected to definition of the role of mothers taken by women or within families play an important role. This chapter also examines what steps are necessary before even the first child can be taken on. By looking at the motivation of women engaging in family day care it offers insights useful for policy makers wishing to expand the provision of childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

The micro-business of childminders and *Tagesmütter* is the focus of Chapter 5. Here difficulties arising out of the definition of working time and income earned are identified as an outcome of the fuzzy boundary of the public and the private specific to the provision of family day care. This chapter shows that the legal framework results in restricted business opportunities for childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Whether and how family day care providers attempt to exhaust these restricted opportunities is studied by looking at how childminders and *Tagesmütter* approach finding work. It reveals important differences between the business opportunities for childminders and for *Tagesmütter* leading back to policies regulating the provision of childcare.

Chapter 6 compares the daily routines of childminders and *Tagesmütter*, and offers a model of the determinants of daily work routines. These are shown to be tightly

connected to cultural norms and social organisation, for example, to other childcare and educational provision. An understanding of the determinants of family day care providers' work routines offers on the one hand an analytical tool for the examination of family day care and on the other hand possibilities to support family day care providers in their daily tasks. At the same time the family day care provider has to find ways to combine her paid work with commitments arising from her role as housewife. What guides the development of daily routines is also a strong indicator of how childminders and *Tagesmütter* define their role of childcare provider in relationship to children in their care and whether models for this task are sought in their experience as mother or as trained childcare worker.

The management of the boundaries of the caring business by childminders and *Tagesmütter* is the topic of Chapter 7. This is mainly played out between family day care provider and parents, and is often an extremely complex and delicate relationship. It appears to be the family day care provider who has to maintain a successful business relationship, provide the appropriate level of replacement of parental care and to set the context of decision making about what care and education of children in family day care entails. This chapter connects the motivation of becoming a childminder or *Tagesmutter* (Chapter 4), the micro business of family day care (Chapter 5), and the care provided for children (Chapter 6) and highlights the problems arising when the caring relationship contains three parties. How family day care providers find a balance is explored by investigating what they mean by attaching the label 'professional' to various aspects of their work in relation to parents.

Chapter 8 focuses on the household of the family day care provider. Looking after other people's children in one's home has effects on individual family members and may have advantages and disadvantages. The relationships developing between individual household members and the children looked after impacts on the definition of the boundary between the public and the private. Taking on children also may affect the relationship between household members, the allocation of unpaid work and the income available.

The concluding chapter returns to the question of whether childminders and *Tagesmütter* are exploited, examines recent changes of policies attempting to improve family day care and contemplates answers as to how to halt the decline of childminders in England. The examination of family day care in two countries also provides the empirical material on

which a further development of the concepts of the private and the public, and the concept of care are based. Models that have been built to examine the social and economic experience of family day care providers may in future be applied to other forms of care.

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[1] The following terms will be used: a childminder is a family day care provider in England. A *Tagesmutter* (plural: *Tagesmütter*) is a family day care provider in Germany. The term 'family day care provider' can be used for childminders and *Tagesmütter* together.

[2] The 'breadwinner' model is based on a gendered division of labour between men in paid employment and women at home providing childcare and domestic labour. It assumes that men in paid work support women in performing domestic labour and children. It was most strongly reflected in the welfare reforms after the Second World War, based on the Beveridge Report 1942.

[3] *Tagesmutter* (plural: *Tagesmütter*) means childminder. The word-for-word translation is day mother. See also Appendix 1: Glossary and Appendix 3: Legal framework.

[4] I used the female pronouns and reflexive pronouns to address family day care providers based on the following findings: all of the *Tagesmütter* registered in Rostock were women. Of the 205 questionnaire respondents in England three were men. They were registered as childminders or childminding assistants to be able to provide emergency care and were partners of childminders.

[5] The *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* [The Child and Youth Services Act] lists the tasks of the Jugendamt in paragraph 2. Youth services comprise benefits and other functions in favour of young persons and families. They include socio-educational provision for children and young persons, are responsible for protecting children and young persons, have to provide for the furtherance of education and upbringing by the family, provide for the support of children in day care establishments and day care, provide services for children in need and help young adults. The *Jugendamt* is also responsible for all services surrounding adoption, foster care and guardianship.

[6] From 1996 to 1997 the number of registered childminders had fallen by 4 per cent, from 1997 to 1998 again by 4 per cent, from 1998 to 1999 by 13 per cent, from 1999 to 2000 by 8 per cent. Although the places registered fell also between 1996 and 2000 this did not happen parallel to the decline of registered childminders, but went hand in hand with an increase of the average number of places registered per childminder from 3.7 places in 1996 to 4.2 places in 2000 (Department for Education and Employment 2000b, my calculation)

Chapter 2: Methodology: utilising quantitative and qualitative methods in cross-national research

Researching the economic and social experience of British childminders and German *Tagesmütter* is, like other inquiries into social life, a process with distinct stages with particular problems attached to each stage. Every decision taken in this process opens up opportunities for and poses limitations on the next stage of research. Research takes place in the context of contemporary debates over methodology and has to be tailored according to the available resources including the time and the skills of the individual researcher involved. The form this piece of research took was made possible by my language skills, by my knowledge of quantitative and qualitative methods and the possibility of utilising supporting software packages like SPSS and QSR NUD*IST.

The discussion about comparative, cross-national research contemplates theoretical problems and the different approaches linked to this kind of inquiry (Scheuch 1990; Rose 1991; Hantrais and Mangen 1996b), the usefulness of crossing nation-state borders in doing research (Øyen 1990; May 1993; Hill 1996), as well as the description of how practical problems can be solved (Chamberlayne and King 1996; Rainbird 1996; Soydan 1996). The discussion about qualitative and quantitative methods emphasises compatibility or incompatibility and its epistemological, ontological and political implications (Oakley 1981; Guba (ed) 1990; Reinharz 1992; Mies 1993; Hammersley 1995) as well as the scope for combining methods (Brannen 1992; Bryman 1992; Hammersley 1992; Oakley 1998). Conducting the research showed how intertwined both areas of debate are.

The core of the research project consisted of two sets of postal questionnaires, one sent out to childminders in the Northeast of England, the other sent out to *Tagesmütter* in the Northeast of Germany, and ten in-depth interviews each of childminders and of *Tagesmütter*. Therefore two areas of methodological debate are relevant: the discussion of methodological issues in comparative, or more appropriately, cross-national research and the debates about qualitative and quantitative methods, and their combination.

This chapter begins with the chronology of the fieldwork for this study. This information about the research activities helps to place the various challenges encountered in their

sequential order. It is followed by a discussion of the theoretical problems raised by cross-national, cross-language research. The subsequent section examines the methods employed in detail. Again the emphasis is on problems arising out of conducting research in two countries and two languages. However, some issues arising out of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as ethical issues in connection with interviews and observations will be addressed. The chapter closes with an overview of the samples.

Chronology

The sequence of the individual parts of the research process is important for the understanding of how methods were employed and combined. The first step was to develop a postal questionnaire to be sent out to childminders living and working in the Northeast of England. It was informed by a small-scale study of eight childminders in Gateshead 1996[1], using semi-structured, taped interviews (Gelder 1997). The questionnaire was piloted in December 1997. At the beginning of March 1998 475 questionnaires were sent out to childminders registered with four neighbouring local authorities in the Northeast of England (Appendix 2). After a reminder letter was sent, a total of 205 questionnaires (43 per cent) were returned and were analysed supported by the use of the statistical software package SPSS.

The questionnaire covered many aspects of the social and economic situation of childminders. It asked about the length of time worked as childminder and the circumstances of registration. There were questions on childminders' education and training, on previous or other involvement in the labour market and their experience of childcare provision concerning their own children. The questionnaire covered the business side, i.e. the use of contracts, charges and expenses. It asked questions about the process of arranging childcare with parents. One section of the questionnaire tapped into the attitudes towards minded children and their parents, as well as their role as childminders. Information was collected on whether and how the childminder's partner or children support the work as family day care provider. Of course the questionnaire also inquired about general demographic features. Attached to the questionnaire was a diary sheet.

Childminders were asked to recall their last working day and note down all household and childminding activities and commitments.

The results revealed seeming contradictions and raised new issues. For example, a majority of childminders wished to develop a professional relationship with parents and, at the same time even more hoped to befriend parents (this and more of counter intuitive relations are picked up in Chapter 7). However the use of questions with closed answers as a research tool may be the root of these seeming contradictions. Answers to closed question may miss out essential information about processes, and data collected in this way is less appropriate to explain complicated relationships or feelings. Informed by the data from the questionnaire, a schedule for semi-structured interviews was drawn up (Appendix 7) and ten British childminders interviewed. The sample was drawn from childminders who had indicated on the questionnaire their willingness to be interviewed. The choice of whom to interview was guided by a desire for breadth. In striving towards a broad cross-section of experience, the following criteria were considered: the length of time women had been working as childminders; the number of children on their books; the length of their working week; and whether they belonged to the group of childminders who were earning below or above average income. Other important criteria were the age of childminders, how many children of their own they had, and whether they were living with a partner or alone. Additionally an attempt was made to select childminders who saw their future as family day care providers in optimistic terms and women who had a more pessimistic outlook, and women with and without childcare training.

In October 1998, after the interviews of British childminders were concluded the first journey to Germany took place. The aim of the trip was to interview key personnel, build up contacts in two German locations, one in the old *Länder*, the other in the new *Länder*, and to identify literature. These intentions were achieved in Rostock, a town in one of the new *Länder*. Excellent contacts with *Tagesmütter* quickened the pace of fieldwork beyond my plans for this first trip. A few women were happy to be interviewed and in their eyes there was no reason why this should be postponed to my second journey. To discourage participation would have been inconsistent with research ethics and counterproductive for my work. The interview schedule for British childminders was used and adapted *ad hoc* to the situation of German *Tagesmütter*. During the first trip five *Tagesmütter* were interviewed. Their recruitment is best described as a mixture of

opportunity and snow-ball sampling. As in England the sampling was guided by striving for breadth using the same criteria as above.

The second part of this visit to Germany took me to Kiel, a town in Schleswig-Holstein, one of the old *Länder*. The meetings with key personnel revealed that *Tagesmütter* in Kiel were largely self-employed and not subsidised, but that there were also two pilot schemes employing family day care providers. The working conditions for *Tagesmütter* differed in each of these projects.

On the return to Britain the decision was made to drop the German location in the old *Länder*. The main concern that led to this decision was that due to time and resource restrictions the number of *Tagesmütter* that could have been interviewed in both locations would have been too small and would not cover the breadth of *Tagesmütter* sufficiently[2]. Instead the questionnaire was shortened, adapted to the German situation[3] and translated (Appendix 6), and sent out to all the 40 registered *Tagesmütter* in Rostock in February 1999. The return rate was 50 per cent. Again, the data was analysed using the software package SPSS.

The interview schedule for the remaining five interviews in Germany was based on what had until then been the *ad hoc* adaptation of the English interview schedule. It was adapted in the light of some of the results of the questionnaire and the previously conducted interviews. The choice of interviewees was guided by the attempt to match the English sample as closely as possible concerning time worked as a *Tagesmutter*, own family situation, below or above average income etc. These five *Tagesmütter* were interviewed in May 1999. All the interviews were transcribed but left in their original language. Coding and analysis were supported by the software package QSR NUD*IST.

A comparative, cross-national study

The impulse and the courage to embark on an empirical study crossing country and language boarders, are rooted in my rather cross-national life. Being virtually bilingual, my experience of bringing up children in Germany and Britain (and another two countries) and my background of German childcare training and work experience in

different childcare settings gave me the confidence to cope with the practical challenges this kind of research throws up, but also inspired me to address theoretical problems. Let us consider the theoretical issues first.

In order to render a study comparative and cross-national the phenomenon or phenomena are compared and analysed systematically in respect of the same concepts with the intention of explaining them and generalising from them (Hantrais and Mangen 1996a). A mere compilation of information about two or more countries, placed side by side, will not do (Rose 1991). This research requirement should, and can be, addressed well before the writing up and dissemination. The design of the research process had the underpinning of such a comparative element in mind. For example, after I had coded the English interviews I resisted the temptation to analyse them separately. Instead I coded the German interviews. Also the structure of the thesis reflects the on-going comparison.

The other element of a comparative, cross-national study – the use of the same concepts – was facilitated by my language skills. On a practical level it allowed me to undertake every step of the research myself. Therefore, the loss of information and the use of different concepts that go hand in hand when the researcher has to rely on translations or interpreters, or co-researchers working in another country and in another language could be minimised. However, language not only conveys concepts, but is part of the conceptual framework, in which it reflects institutions, thought processes, values and ideology (Lisle 1985).

Another problem that has to be faced is connected to ethnocentrism. It may turn out to be misguided to use the properties peculiar to one country in order to come to conclusions about other countries. In such an instance these countries are merely used as dummy variables (Scheuch 1990). Although the study of the family day care providers' experience did start in the Northeast of England, including quantitative and qualitative research methods, it does not result in a model or yardstick of family day care against which the experience of *Tagesmütter* or family day care providers working in other countries or regions can be measured. However, in my case the argument can easily be turned on its head. I spent the first 30 years of my life in Germany. Therefore my ethnocentrism may be seen as centred around German values and norms. Then again, my personal live has, several times, put me in situations where I have had to make sense of rules governing every day life in another country and have had to learn how to fit in.

These experiences also taught me that there are many different ways to organise social life and, relevant to my research, that there are many different ways of rearing children. Through these experiences I have managed to rid myself of the rather emotional conviction that the way of doing things according to one's own childhood culture is right. Instead I have realised that, at the very least, it can be improved.

One of the theoretical issues concerning all cross-national studies is 'Galton's problem', which was raised over a century ago. This asks whether a given culture can be seen as 'causing' something or whether what is observed is the result of diffusion across cultures (Scheuch 1990). The question as to what is seen as 'good' mothering in Germany and in Britain is a good example. Is it the result of English or German culture or does some diffusion across cultures take place? For instance, was the role of the ideal mother as it developed in the post-war West Germany based on Bowlby's (1953) assertions that children deprived of the care of their mother may develop physical and mental illness in later life, or did it feed on the glorification of motherhood in Nazi-Germany? In relation to family day care, the interpretation of Bowlby's work and a further development of attachment theory by German psychologists and paediatricians was used to emphasise that children would be damaged if separated from their mothers on a daily basis (Blüml et al. 1977; Arbeitsgemeinschaft tagesmütter - Bundesverband für Eltern Pflegeeltern und Tagesmütter e.V. 1992). In the same vein, in both countries the discussion of the advantages or disadvantages of day care for children and of quality issues uses evidence from international research (e.g.Hennessy et al. 1992; Fthenakis and Textor 1998)[4].

Recent German history provides a new twist to Galton's problem. The unification of Germany has represented the adoption of West German social organisation and has entailed the condemnation of socialist pedagogy and organisation of childcare, and with it the approach that motherhood and paid work are compatible (Meise 1995). However, it remains to be seen whether a diffusion between the old and the new *Länder* will take place or whether West German ideals and norms will be established in the unified Germany.

The contemplation of 'Galton's problem' in my research points to the next theoretical problem that needs consideration. 'Comparative' in connection with social research can mean different, not very precisely distinguished forms of research, like cross-country, cross-national, cross-societal, cross-cultural, cross-systemic, cross-institutional. Others

replace 'cross' with 'trans' pointing to a comparison on the macro-level (Øyen 1990). This indicates that the comparison can takes place on several levels. As Scheuch (1990) emphasised, the nation-state is a geographical frame for sampling. Yet often data collected is used as if it is cross-cultural and cross-societal as well. Whether that is the case or not is a substantive problem that should not be ignored. Recent German history brings this point home. What had been and is now again one country and one nation possesses significant internal divisions. For forty years people lived in separate societies, under different economic and political regimes, with different expectations and models of how to lead one's life. Although the gendered role expectation of people living in the old and the new *Länder* may be moving towards each other, the differences continue to be prominent (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a). Here the unit, German nation-state, or the unit German society, or German culture would be too large to explain causes and would ignore internal differences. The same has to apply to Britain. The scope of the study is limited to the experience of childminders and *Tagesmütter* in their location and cannot without caution be generalised to all British childminders or all German *Tagesmütter.*

Yet the context in which childminders and *Tagesmütter* work is situated at different levels. This form of childcare is regulated on the nation-state level by laws. In England The Children Act 1989 and in Germany the *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* cover the whole geographical area of each country. Nevertheless, in both countries these laws delegate further interpretation and definitions to a lower political level. Financial decisions by local authorities, *Länder*, districts or cities, the strength of family day care associations and the discretion of staff working for local authorities impinge on the childminders' and *Tagesmütter's* experience. By treating the context in which childminding takes place as a set of variables and defining the purpose of comparison as finding identicals the universality of a specific statement will be shown. Yet when the purpose is to show differences, specific time-space co-ordinates of this form of childcare will be revealed. The interplay of several levels impinging on the social and economic experience of women providing childcare at home has to be continuously kept in mind for the scope of the study. The analysis and comparison of the experience of childminders and *Tagesmütter* in two different locations can provide insights in common features and

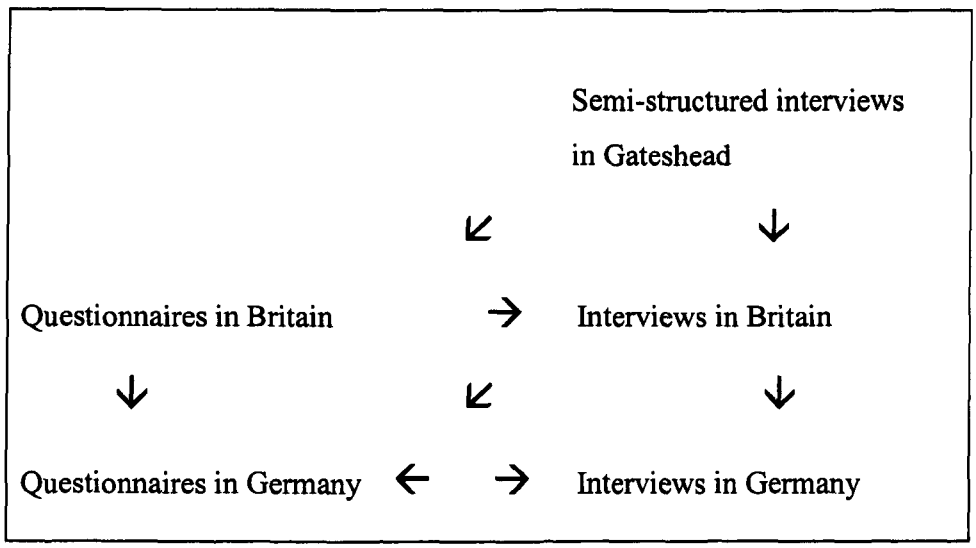
differences of self-employed, homeworking childcare providers and the processes leading to the specific forms this kind of childcare business takes.

Methods

Before the methods used and the combination of those methods is considered, some preliminary remarks seem appropriate. A polarisation of quantitative versus qualitative, reproducing a confusion between epistemology, methodology and method has been recognised as impoverishing research (Kelly et al. 1992; Maynard 1994), as has the refusal to use certain methods on political grounds (Oakley 1998). A distinction between epistemological and technical issues allows for a choice of research techniques suitable to the problem and the context (Bryman 1984). Which method is used ought to be guided by the research question (Hammersley 1995). Also the decision as to whether a combination of methods renders a study superior or whether the addition of another method rather serves cosmetic purposes has to be guided by the research problem (Bryman 1992).

In one sense, as Figure 2.1 shows, methods were combined in the 'classical' way. A small number of interviews was used to develop a questionnaire; the questionnaire provided a sampling aid; and the subsequent interviews served to clarify findings from the survey. However, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was chosen in order to make use of the strengths of each, and to mitigate against their intrinsic weaknesses. The surveys aimed at structural aspects of family day care and attempted to identify possible changes at the micro level. For example, does family day care involve other members of the household and if yes, in what way? Another strand of questions sought to explore how the division of domestic labour relates to family day care. The interviews served to clarify some apparent contradictions emerging from the questionnaires, to pin-point change over time and to explain change within the family due the woman's work as childminder or *Tagesmutter*. Other themes covered by the interviews were the relationships between the people involved – the family day care provider and her family, parents and looked-after children – and how these relationships had developed over time, or why they came to an end.

Figure 2.1: The structure of methods



A useful distinction is that between research instrument and data, which can each be predominantly quantitative or qualitative (Bryman 1992). Most of the data elicited with the help of the questionnaires was clearly quantifiable data. Nevertheless, some open-ended questions were included and respondents were encouraged to use any available space to put forward additional information. Initially there was no intention to code these answers because it was assumed that quantifying would result in the loss of the richness and depth of the answers. The answers were collected in a different document. Yet, for example, the question about how childminders and *Tagesmütter* saw their future in the millennium produced a set of answers that could easily be categorised and contribute to the general description of childminders' experience. It provided an additional variable within the quantitative data set. The interviews also produced a proportion of data which was predominantly quantitative. For example, given that the interviews took place approximately six months after the women had filled in the questionnaire they allowed me to ask about changes of number of children looked after or changes of hours.

The qualitative and the quantitative data collected addressed research questions on different levels. Figure 2.1 describes the development of research tools. Yet the analysis of data does not have to follow the same strict order. Throughout the analytical stage the results from the two surveys triggered questions that were addressed in the interviews and vice versa. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data in this manner was not with the intention of triangulation for the sake of validity as proposed by Denzin (1970) but had

the purpose to address different aspects of the social and economic experience of family day care providers.

Any empirical research has to overcome 'in-put' and 'out-put' barriers. The first is connected to data collection and the latter to the dissemination of the findings. These barriers are intensified in cross-national, cross-language, comparative research. The following sections will treat the research process as a sequence where data collection is followed by analysis and where the research process comes to an end with dissemination. This serves the purpose of clarifying specific problems attached to each step and the possibilities of overcoming them. It does not intend to ignore the overlap of the steps or a more complicated progress of research which have already been discussed under 'chronology'. The occurring overlap often has been described as messy, or, more optimistically, can be seen as an invitation to serendipity.

Data collection

The most common in-put barrier encountered in cross-national research, language, was irrelevant in my case[5]. 'Middle men' such as translators or informers speaking my language were not necessary. Sampling was not restricted by pragmatic 'deliverability' criteria based on the ability of the researched to speak my language, as described by Harding (1996). I was able to develop research instruments (questionnaires, interview schedules) for both countries. This entailed more than simple translations. Closed questions in questionnaires have to reflect the social, cultural or political context of respondents. The wording of a question that appears reasonable in one country may be incomprehensible or even sound offensive in the other.

The literature used was not restricted to sources available in English. Instead, the in-put barriers arising out of limited time and resources, concentrating fieldwork and the German literature search in a short period proved to be the greatest hindrance. This resulted in an imbalance of concepts regarding their literary sources[6]. However, in this case, the skewing towards English literature may not seriously impinge on the claim of being a comparative study. German academics make use of English literature and concepts developed by English speaking fellows. Acclaimed English journals are available in German university libraries. Unfortunately, this is not reciprocated in England.

Quite a common problem encountered in comparative research concerns data available for secondary analysis (Glover 1996). The different political and social contexts in which data is produced results in data sets that are not directly comparable. Taking the example of childcare provision, the British Department of Health and from 1999 the Department of Education and Employment (now Department for Education and Skills) publish annually the number of registered childminders, nurseries, out-of-school schemes and playgroups, and the registered number of places for children under eight (latest edition: Department for Education and Employment 2000b). This data does not reflect the numbers of registered childminders who are working as family day care providers, nor can it reflect the actual number of children in the care of childminders. A registered childminder may not fill any or all of the places, or she may care for several part-time children. In contrast, the German Federal Office for Statistics publishes two sets of data regarding childcare provision. Annually the numbers of children registered in day care centres based on a micro census are available (latest edition: Statistisches Bundesamt 2000). Every four years data from all day centres concerning the numbers of places and staff employed are collected and published (e.g. Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2000).

Attempts to overcome problems of incompatible data for example by the European Commission (2000) or by Ruxton (1996) use the 'nation-state' for data collection and comparison. The success of the harmonisation process may be limited and different national perceptions of a particular variable can persist (Glover 1996). For example, being unemployed in Britain is a different experience and has different consequences from being unemployed in Germany. An additional problem for my research was that these compilations, and other statistical publications too, ignored or underplayed the differences between the former GDR and the former West Germany.

Sampling

From the outset of the research project it was clear that in Britain only registered, legitimate childminders were to be included. This decision was taken in the light of the emerging policy context. New Labour promised a national childcare strategy in their 1997 election campaign (Boseley and Smithers 1997). It was clear that registered childminders were to play a key role in childcare provision. The Green Paper setting out the National

Childcare Strategy from May 1998 included the introduction of networks of approved childminders (Department for Education and Employment 1998). At the same time including only registered childminders offered a clear definition of the population and appeared to have the advantage of easier access. A corresponding decision for German *Tagesmütter* was not possible. Only family day care providers looking after four or more children (excluding her own), or those receiving a refund by the *Jugendamt* are legally required to register. The combination of available refund for *Tagesmütter* with a good provision of subsidised childcare in Rostock made any choice by parents or family day care provider to decline the refund and avoid registration economically unfeasible. It is very unlikely that there were unregistered *Tagesmütter* in Rostock.

In Britain the lists of registered childminders of four neighbouring local authorities were used. The proportion of registered childminders in each local authority receiving a questionnaire ranged from 21 per cent to 34 per cent[7]. The return rate in northern England was 43 per cent. The sample represents 12 per cent of all the registered childminders in these four local authorities at the time (ranging from 9 to 15 per cent). In Germany all *Tagesmütter* registered with the Jugendamt Rostock received a questionnaire. Here the return rate was 50 per cent, covering half of the population.

The questionnaire informed the respondents about my intention to conduct interviews at a later point. Family day care providers who were willing to be considered were asked to provide their telephone numbers. In Britain 54 (26 per cent of the questionnaire respondents) agreed to be contacted to be interviewed. In Germany 12 of the *Tagesmütter* respondents to questionnaire forwarded their telephone number. However, I had already interviewed two of the women, leaving me 10 *Tagesmütter* (50 per cent) to be selected for interviews.

All but one family day care provider contacted in order to set up interviews maintained their co-operation. The woman who did not want to be interviewed had given up work as a childminder and preferred not to be interviewed as a 'former' childminder. Unfortunately it was not possible to interview a lone mother working as *Tagesmutter,* matching the English sample.

The high response rate and the impressive readiness to give up time for interviews seem to confirm that there is a need for these women to talk to somebody not immediately involved in family day care provision. This is strongly reminiscent of Janet Finch's (1993)

experience of interviewing the wives of clergymen. Family members, the parents of the children they look after, the officers of the local authority or Jugendamt, all are either directly involved or have their own agenda concerning family day care. I think that most of the childminders and *Tagesmütter* interviewed felt that they had the opportunity to describe their work to me 'as it is', without the need to fear any repercussions or consequences[8]. There is a possibility that childminders saw the interviews as an opportunity to improve the image of family day care providers. Three separate cases of young children killed by care providers: a British au pair in America (e.g. Coles and Patton 1997) a childminder in Britain (Hall 1998a) and an Australian nanny in Britain (Hall 1998b) had been in the headlines. *Tagesmütter* in Germany did not appear to have to struggle with a bad reputation. Being a family day care provider was something to be proud of. *Tagesmütter* in Rostock seemed to emphasise being listened to as women who had achieved something in quite difficult times.

However, other motivations to be interviewed by me came into play. In Britain a number of childminders whose own children studied at university or were about to go to university wished to support my work, because, as one childminder said "I know how it is" (presumably being a student looking for interviewees). The other reason for agreeing to an interview was simple curiosity. This form of interest may turn out to be a valuable asset to the cross-national researcher. English childminders wanted to know why a German mother-of-three should study at a British university and whether she is here to stay[9]. *Tagesmütter* in Rostock were interested in the same question. Additionally it was important to them to find out whether I was an *Ossi* or a *Wessi*[10]. It can be assumed that my background of living and working in Britain disqualified me from being either a straight *Ossi* or a straight *Wessi* and thereby reduced access problems. Chamberlayne and King (1996) reported that people in eastern Germany were not keen on being interviewed by researchers from the former West Germany. Despite the fact that I am a so called *Wessi*, it was important to take great care not to take the role of the *Besser-Wessi*[11], coming along knowing best how things are organised and practised.

Interviews

The ease of gaining access to childminders and *Tagesmütter* willing to be interviewed was not entirely continued during the interviews themselves. Although I had attempted to conduct interviews without the presence of children and other people, this was to a certain extent out of my control. During 11 of the 20 interviews young children under the age of 10 were present. Those were the women's own children or the children they were looking after. During another three interviews children of this age group attended some of the time. In a further two interviews older children of the childminder stayed and contributed. Additionally I met husbands of the childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Their contribution to the interviews varied from staying throughout the interview to just saying hello.

These scenarios do not represent the well planned, controlled textbook interview. The advantage was that in some of the cases I could directly ask children and husbands, for example, how they felt about their mothers or wives turning the family home into their work place. Of course, situations like that sometimes demanded more control by me. For example, in one interview I had to insist several times, that I was interviewing the woman looking after children and not her husband. In another situation I waited to ask some questions until the childminder's husband had left the room.

The interviews of family day care providers in the presence of children, their own or minded, exposed some technical issues. The more or less frequent interruptions by children for various reasons were anticipated and apart from extending the time needed to complete the interview, had no major effect. Childminders, *Tagesmütter* and I seem to be practised at doing more than one thing at the same time and we could quickly pick up a thread of thought or conversation where it had been interrupted. It was however more difficult to transcribe interviews with interruptions or a lot of background noise due to children's videos.

More importantly, the presence of children during the interview raised ethical questions. The childminders and *Tagesmütter* held the information that I was interested in: their working conditions. I did not look at the quality of care they offered. I did not ask direct questions about what constitutes good childcare in their eyes and whether they think they offer a high quality service. I had not intended to, nor asked permission to, observe their daily work as a childminder or *Tagesmutter*. Yet, during the interviews I could not help but to notice how childminders and *Tagesmütter* interacted with their own and the

children in their care and what they provided for the children, at least for the duration of the interview.

Some of the childminders and *Tagesmütter* explained to the children what was going on and to a certain extent included them. This could take the form of addressing children when answering my question or even passing some of the questions on. In some cases children were asked to perform certain tasks, for example, using flash-cards, in order to show me 'how clever they were', or perhaps what they had learned at the childminder. Some of the interviewees made it very clear, that their priority was the children. These interviews were often interrupted and could only be continued when all the children were content. Others tried to keep the children quiet, amongst other things with the promise that it would not last long, or by distracting them with children's videos.

How children were included in interviews and the extent to which they were cannot guide a decision of how to treat this data. On the one hand I feel qualified to trust my observations – after all, I am trained to assess children; on the other hand I did not set out to do so. For example, some of the relationships between child and family day care provider I observed appeared genuine and it can be assumed that they remain as good or as bad as observed after I had left the house[12]. However, this was a by-product, not prepared for and not systematically undertaken. Additionally, in order to assess the quality of care provided for children a clarification of what constitutes good childcare is needed (Hennessy et al. 1992; Mooney and Munton 1998). Therefore, my covert[13] observations concerning the quality of care offered cannot be generalised. But they are good enough to pose further questions and in this sense will have an impact on the analysis.

Analysis

The analysis of data is the nexus between data collection and dissemination, and by the same token the nexus between in-put and out-put barriers. It is a stage where problems related to the particular form of comparative, cross-national research pose fewer problems. The in-put barriers have been more or less successfully conquered. The researcher is dealing with data in a form she believes she is able to understand and to work with. A reflection on how valid representative data is, whether the concepts can be used to attempt comparison and whether the sampling frame emphasises unduly diverse

experience (Jobert 1996), or may overlook continuities amongst the experience of individuals in different countries (Crompton and LeFeuvre 1996) or quite conversely hides division within a country (Monk and Garcia-Ramon 1996), ought to continue throughout the analytical stage. Yet the action taken according to the outcome of these reflections differ. The results will be found in the critical discussion of the findings in later chapters.

The analytical stage of research is tied between data collection at one end and dissemination at the other. Sorting data is the transition from collection to analysis. Writing notes and informally talking about the research project is the passage from analysis to dissemination. No matter whether quantitative or qualitative methods are employed credibility of the findings are at stake. Validity and reliability are issues for qualitative and quantitative research. Interestingly, it is with the issue of validity that the qualitative/quantitative divide is crossed. Quantitative measures have, at the very minimum, to show 'face-validity (Bryman and Cramer 1997). One method of validating qualitative data is by tabulation (Mason 1996; Silverman 2000). The added challenge of cross-national, cross-language research during the analytical stage is played out differently in each of these research methods.

Sorting and analysing survey data superficially appears to be less problematic. This impression is achieved by the 'trick' of translating responses into numbers. Problems of reliability arising out of the use of two (or more) languages become invisible. For example, according to the survey it appeared that husbands of English childminders talked considerably more often to the parents of the minded children than their German counterparts. Yet the interviews clarified that the translation of the question had changed the meaning. Childminders included informal talk between husbands and parents whereas *Tagesmütter* understood this question as an inquiry about a more formal conversation about the looked-after-children.

Numerical expressions can be subjected to statistical testing. Using the statistical software programme SPSS, I made extensive use of uni-variate analysis and measures of central tendency; as well as testing hypotheses concerning the correlation of variables. As with the conventional standard in social research I accepted a correlation when the p-value was less than 0.05. The focus on mathematical model building may distract from challenges arising out of cross-national research. The expression of survey responses as numbers

invites collation of data sets. Yet the social and cultural context in which the quantified phenomenon takes place may render a straightforward statistical analysis invalid. For example, comparing the income of family day care providers is interesting, but when set against the average income of women in Britain and in Germany, or when regional differences in average income are introduced, the meaning may change.

When employing qualitative methods, issues of reliability and validity are addressed by careful and accurate data generation and by conceptual and ontological clarity (Mason 1996). The reliability of qualitative interviews is facilitated by low-inference descriptors (Seale 1999). In my research this was promoted by conducting all the interviews myself, by personally transcribing all the interviews and by leaving interviews in their original language. Translation only took place when quotes from the German interviews or questionnaires were used when writing up. However, the index system that allows accessing the interviews in various ways and with that facilitating comparison (Mason 1996) was developed in English. This decision was taken with regards to the end product, a doctoral thesis to be submitted and defended in Britain. For the same reasons notes were written in English.

It appears that whilst thinking about the data and about concepts I was happily 'toggling' between the two languages[14]. Most of the time I do not pay a lot of attention to the language I am thinking in and I am used to 'toggling'[15]. Utilising both languages when thinking about social phenomena offers me short-cuts to different concepts embedded in their cultural contexts. The ease of 'toggling' between English and German whilst thinking, sorting, coding and developing questions cannot be maintained when writing up. However, in a few instances I decided to retain German expressions. The aim was twofold. Firstly, German expressions are used to alert the reader to complex institutional structures, which differ from the British way of political and social organisation, for example, parts of the civil service, institutions of education or occupational labels. Secondly, German terms were used to mark and place data and findings in the German context. For example, 'childminders' work in Britain, '*Tagesmütter*' work in Germany and both of them are family day care providers. In this way I hope to offer helpful short-cuts to the reader, well worth learning a little bit of German. Translations and explanations are placed in endnotes attached to the first appearance of the terms and a glossary is provided in Appendix 1.

What showed to be an asset for data collection, for harnessing research costs and during the analytical stage could turn into out-put barriers when writing up or preparing other forms of dissemination. As in other research, publicising findings has to be tailored to the listening audience. Any translation, from one language to another, from one society to another, from one context to another, and so forth, has to be undertaken with great care, loosing as little as possible. The agony arising out of the lack of a quick fix in the form of an easy, correct translation from one language to another is probably most felt by the bi-lingual researcher with extended contextual knowledge of different societies. Attempts to report findings in two or more languages result in a heightened awareness of any change of meanings. A constant evaluation has to take place, how much explanation of context is needed and what can be expected to be the existing knowledge of the audience. Successful dissemination takes place when sufficient information of the 'other' country and social, cultural and political context within which the phenomena was observed is provided. At the same time it has to satisfy citizens or experts as a fair representation of both countries. This may be more easily achieved when working as the sole researcher[16].

Overview of the samples

Altogether 225 family day care providers returned the questionnaires. Of these 20 were *Tagesmütter*, registered in Rostock, and 205 were childminders registered in one of the four local authorities Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle or Sunderland. All of the *Tagesmütter* were actively engaged in childcare. Of the childminders 163 (80 per cent) had children on their books, 24 (12 per cent) were hoping to find children and 18 (9 per cent) had given up, were retired or were not looking after children for other reasons. (See Appendix 2, for a tabular presentation.)

On average, childminders had been registered five years, ranging from just registered to 20 years. The median length registered was four years for the English sample. *Tagesmütter* had been working on average for three years, ranging from six months to 20 years. The median length worked was one year six months.

All of the 20 *Tagesmütter* were women. Of the 205 questionnaire respondents in England three were men. They were registered as childminders or childminding assistants to be able to provide emergency care and were partners of childminders. The mean age of

Tagesmütter was 37 years, ranging from 21 to 60 years. The mean age of childminders was 39, ranging from 24 to 62 years.

The majority of childminders were mothers. Of 185 registered childminders who answered this question 183 (99 per cent) had at least one child. The average number of children was for both samples two. However, *Tagesmütter* had their own first child earlier than childminders. On average the age of becoming a mother of *Tagesmütter* was 22 compared to 26 in the English sample.

One-hundred-and-eighty-four registered childminders provided information about whether they lived with children and whether they lived with their spouse or partner. Most childminders, 159 (86 per cent) lived with their spouse and their children, 15 (8 per cent) lived with children, another 8 (4 per cent) lived with their spouse and 2 (1 per cent) childminders lived alone. Of the 20 *Tagesmütter* 17 (85 per cent) had at least one child. As for the English sample, most *Tagesmütter* 13 (65 per cent) lived with their spouse and children, 5 (25 per cent) lived with their partner, 1 was a lone parent and another one lived alone.

The mean age of family day care providers when they registered was 34 years in England and also 34 years in Germany. At registration their youngest child was of an average of 7.5 years in England and 12 years in Germany.

An overview in table form of the questionnaire respondents and of the interviewees is provided in Appendix 2.

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[1] A vacation scholarship granted by the University of Newcastle upon Tyne made the study possible.

[2] Just the comparison of the two projects in Kiel would have been interesting. Particularly the effects of the aspect that one project allowed *Tagesmütter* to choose which children to take on but the other did not would be worthwhile to examine.

[3] For example, it had to consider different forms of childcare provision available, the education systems in the former East and the former West Germany and the appropriate income brackets.

[4] Hennessy (1992) includes studies from the USA, Britain and Sweden. Fthenakis (1998) looks at research undertaken in the USA, Sweden, Australia, Israel, Canada and Germany.

[5] Dialects should not be underestimated. Despite my knowledge of North German dialects and expressions I came across a 'new' word during my first set of interviews in Germany. Perhaps not surprisingly I was not able to find the word in any dictionary, nor to find anybody who knew its meaning. During the second trip to Germany I was able to clarify this expression as follows: *möhlen* describes when children take out or rearrange toys without engaging in 'proper' play. *Möhlen* is connected to younger children. The advantage is that it keeps children busy; the disadvantage is that it tends to leave a mess.

[6] In one university library (Kiel), searching for German literature on homework resulted only in references to Gerhart Hauptmann's (1892) *Die Weber* [the weavers] and Hauptmann's other work. Certainly, the weavers were exploited homeworkers and the play describes the revolt of Silesian weavers in 1844. Other, literature on homework could not be identified.

[7] The range of the samples of childminder in the four local authorities who received a questionnaire was due to the limited access to addresses of registered childminders in one local authority. The negotiation of access with the responsible Early Years officer resulted in a compromise. I was to use addresses of a 20 per cent random sample of registered childminders, drawn by an officer of the local authority. In the three other local authorities the proportion of registered childminders receiving a questionnaire could be increased. This was possible because it turned out that there were less childminders registered than at the point in time when decisions on the sample size were made and questionnaires were produced.

[8] That this included a certain degree of 'impression management' goes without saying. By the same token I chose to omit the information about my extensive German childcare training.

[9] That I am not British seems to be obvious because of my first name (sometimes confused with 'Ulrika', a Swedish women known to most English people, who had been a weather forecaster in television and since attracted some other media attention). However, most childminders concluded from my cross-national research design, that I must be German.

[10] An *Ossi* (derived from *Ost* - east) is a person from the former GDR, a *Wessi* (derived from West - west) grew up in the FRG. Both expressions carry prejudice towards the people from 'the other Germany'.

[11] *Besser-Wessi* is a word play combining *Besserwisser* (know-all) with *besser West* (better West), describing the impression of many people in the new *Länder* that with the unification every thing 'east' has lost its value and must be replaced by 'west', introduced by *Wessis*.

[12] I have observed 'good' relationships between family day care providers and children where characteristics are an easiness of communication, taking children seriously and an all-round tenderness. In these families children seemed to be included and attempts were made to treat children fairly and foster positive relationships between children. Sadly, I also observed family day care providers who continuously reprimanded children, sometime just by harshly uttering their names (without explanation as to what the child was or was not supposed to do) and women who were not able to understand what children were trying to express. In another case I was told in front of one particular child that this child had an evil streak,

followed by the information that older children in this family day care provider's care were now allowed to push, hit or bite back, when pushed, hit or bitten by this child. It appeared, so I was told, to be the solution to manage this child's behaviour. In another household a child had to stand in the 'naughty corner' as a punishment for playing too wildly. The most disturbing feature is that none of these family day care providers appeared to be aware that their behaviour was problematic.

[13] My observations were also covert, because most of the interviewees did not know about my childcare training and therefore about my inclination to observe their relationship to the children, activities and toys offered, routine established etc.

[14] The expression to 'toggle' is familiar to personal computer users. It describes jumping between open programmes or windows with the help of shortcut keys.

[15] The 'thinking language' is influenced by the context in which I became familiar with a topic. For example, thinking about social policy and sociology on a theoretical level usually happens in English, due to my studies in England and in English. Thinking about pedagogic issues comes more easily in German due to my German childcare training. My everyday life toggles between German and English. I speak German to my children, although our 'family language' is English to include my husband. I watch English and German television programmes, read books and newspapers in both languages etc.

[16] When the research is undertaken by a team of researchers of different countries, solutions as to how to overcome out-put barriers have to be negotiated. However, it may lead to disappointment for some members of the team, because they may feel that their country is not very well presented (Bradshaw et al. 1993).

Chapter 3: Concepts, structures and policies

> Childminders look after children in the childminder's own home. They are registered with their local authority and inspected every year. (Factsheet, Department for Education and Employment 2000c)

> Parents! Parents! Parents! Would you like to work with children? Would you like to earn some money? Would you like a fulfilling job? Why not consider becoming a childminder. (Flyer, Gateshead Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership, 2000)

> Today we understand as [family] day care the regular care of children for part of the day by a care person in his or her household or in the household of the parents of the child. ... Up to now [family] day care takes the form of self-employment, and belongs to the family supporting measures of the youth services. (Arbeitsgemeinschaft tagesmütter - Bundesverband für Eltern Pflegeeltern und Tagesmütter e.V. 1992, p. 4)

The gender-neutral language of the quotes above disguises that family day care is a women's – and a mothers' – issue. All of the *Tagesmütter* in Rostock and all of the childminder respondents in the Northeast of England were women (excluding three men registered as assistants being able to offer emergency care[1]). This fits into other research that found that the majority of the childcare labour force is female (Penn and McQuail 1997; Cameron and Moss 1998; Early Years National Training Organisation 1999) and reflects the predominately female childcare labour force in Germany (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2000). Almost all family day care providers were mothers (99 of the English respondents and 85 per cent of the German respondents). Mothers remain responsible for organising the care of their children, when they cannot or do not wish to provide care themselves (Brannen and Moss 1991; Windebank 1999). The responsibility for childcare arrangements may have been an issue before family day care providers took up this kind of self-employment and is an issue for the users of their services.

The location of the service provision in the home, and the nature of family day care providers' activities, point to two relevant and interrelated areas of interest. One area is that of the gendered nature of the public and the private spheres, and the other is the theorisation of caring. Both of these areas are of considerable interest to feminists across several disciplines. The location and the nature of family day care provision results in two further implications for the analysis of the social and economic experience of childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Firstly, it cannot ignore other members of the household of the family day care provider, and secondly, it has to look at the relationship to others involved in childcare arrangements, for example officers implementing policies or other family day care providers. The first point is underpinned by the practicalities of looking after other people's children at home. But more importantly the decision to become a family day care provider, to continue to offer this form of childcare and the consequences of this self-employment are played out at the household level. Here the household is defined as "the basic social unit of the society, a unit whose boundary is formed by common agreement on the management of its resources, both the management of resource inflows into the household, and their use and distribution." (Oughton et al. 1997, p. 42).

This chapter sets out to develop a theoretical framework that allows analysing family day care providers' double character as 'being confronted with a problem' and as 'solution'. They share with other women the dilemma of how to combine paid and unpaid work arising out of their roles as housewives and mothers. Solving this dilemma by taking up work as a childcare provider also offers a solution of this very same dilemma to other women making use of this service. In this process unpaid care of children by their parents (mothers) is substituted by paid care provided by childminders and *Tagesmütter*, who are themselves mothers.

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* have in common with mothers seeking childcare their generally disadvantaged position in the labour market and that they undertake the bulk of unpaid domestic work. Explanations for this state of affairs are diverse. Roughly they are divided between those taking a starting point from individual actions, for example Hakim (1995; 1996a; 1996b) who claims that women's tastes and preferences are decisive; or taking a starting point from social and economic structures. Here structures like gender, class and race are seen as responsible for the disadvantages certain groups of women encounter. The latter perspective may focus on discrimination within organisations

(Bynner et al. 1997) or take as its starting point education and the training courses or occupations young men and women are channelled into (Engelbrech 1991). An assessment of what is more decisive – individual action or structural determinants – is not possible. Family day care providers face as individuals and as members of chosen and given groups structures of constraint, described by Folbre (1994) as a set of assets, rules, norms and preferences. These structures of constraint are complex and multi-layered and have consequences for the location of individuals:

> Individuals cannot be located by a single set of coordinates, because they operate in many different collective dimensions, within many different chosen and given groups. Nor can they be located by a list of all the given groups to which they belong, by a simple 'adding up' of separate positions. The interaction between different dimensions of collective identity affects the choices individuals make about which collective interests to pursue. (Folbre 1994, p. 52)

As an analytical tool 'structures of collective constraint' allow overcoming theoretical and analytical deficiencies of neo-classical and Marxist economists, utilising concepts from each. As long as the aim of explaining common gender interests is not lost this is not seen as problematic (Folbre 1994). This chapter aims to map out the structures of constraint within which women become childminders and *Tagesmütter* and continue to provide this special form of childcare services to other women.

The chapter begins with a look at concepts of the private and the public concerning their usefulness for the exploration of the social and economic experience of family day care providers. Exploring concepts of women's work relevant to family day care providers will follow this. The unpaid labour women provide in the private sphere is multi-facetted. Some tasks can be defined as work quite unproblematically whilst the definition and the consequences of caring labour are less clear-cut. The next section will look at the relationship between paid and unpaid work. It takes its starting point from women's position in the labour market. The distinctive different development of women's position in the labour market due to the historical development of the former East Germany compared to Britain deserves a more extensive exploration. This is taken as an opportunity to look at the family day care provider as a member of a household. Of

particular interest is a theoretical framework facilitating an explanation of the role of children in the family day care provider's household. No less important is to discuss the role of income earned by women within the household. The last large section focuses on another feature of the structures of constraint. Women's position within the public/private spheres has to be connected to policies supporting and regulating the raising of children. This includes the extent and form of childcare provision available.

The public and the private

The concept of the private and the public is an interestingly ambiguous dualism as Jennings (1993) emphasises. The family, or the household, often identified with the female, caring, subjective are always defined as 'private'. The state, the sphere of the political, of citizenship and of rights, is always defined as 'public'. However, the (market) economy straddles both. It may be public in contrast to the private household, or it may be private, in contrast to the public state and policies (Jennings 1993). This observation appears to be particularly relevant to the research of family day care provision.

Women and men occupy different positions. Women are identified with the private domestic domain and men are seen to occupy positions in both, the public and the private. The gendered nature of the public and the private had been seen as given and functional both in sociology and in economics. Sociology is interested in how these two spheres emerged, and how they are interrelated. The boundary between the public and the private is a physical one. It is founded in the different locales of work and home. It is also founded in a division of roles. Boundary changes were viewed as a beneficial adaptation to modernity. The private sphere, the family, was seen as holding important functions for society as a whole. Its main task was the socialisation of children. However, claims emerged that the institution of the family became emptied of functions resulting in a nuclear family specialised around the core functions of socialisation and personality stabilisation (Parsons and Bales 1956).

In contrast to sociology, the division between the public and the private sphere for neo-classical economists used to be marked by a disinterest in the private household. Individuals are assumed to make rational choices with utility maximisation in mind. The mainstream economists' disciplinary centre is the modern, formal and measurable economy. However, the 'New Home Economist' Gary Becker opened up the black box of the household, extending the methods of neoclassical economic analysis to the household

(Wheelock 1990; Wheelock and Oughton 1998). Like Parsons' concept of 'family' in sociology, adapting as a basic unit to social changes, the household in the New Home Economics model remains a site of rational decision making and joint utility. Issues of gender inequality or power relations are not part of this model.

Institutional economics in contrast, emphasises that social processes are not governed by universal laws and eschews notions of functional necessity in the way that human needs are met. All behaviour has to be seen as multidimensional and complex. A theoretical framework concerned with economic behaviour has to include social, cultural and political contexts. Within these contexts preferences are shaped as well as opportunities and constraints develop. An inclusion of the social, political and cultural context also reveals power relationships within institutions. Jennings (1993) pointed out that there are important similarities to the foundations of institutional economics and feminism. Both are interested in historical processes, and wish to include culture in their theoretical framework. The context in which individuals are embedded is always a cultural context consisting of values, rules and norms. These are not fixed but contested and change over time. The institutionalist's perspective prescribes a mode of social inquiry that places cultural and historical context in the foreground and that freely crosses disciplinary boundaries. Mariussen and Wheelock (1997) propose a synthesis of economic and sociological institutional approaches. This allows one to look at power relations within the household and between households, to examine how the institutions of the family household and the labour market interact and to study choices and strategies.

Second wave feminism put an end to the view of division of the public and the private sphere as unproblematic. In the mid 1970s the domestic labour debate made important comparisons between domestic labour and paid work. It hinged on the applicability of the Marxist' model to domestic labour, and depending on the stance taken, whether women were exploited (by men and/or capitalists) or 'merely' oppressed (Bubeck 1995; Gardiner 2000). This mainly theoretical debate achieved recognition that households and markets need to be analysed as interrelated but distinctive sectors. It emphasised that an analysis of domestic labour should reveal gender differences rather than conceal those, and that care giving work is a central element of gender division (Gardiner 2000). It is also Gardiner (1997) who remarked that it is not necessary to use the concept of exploitation to show gender inequality. It was felt that starting from an empirical base was more promising (Wheelock 1990; Gardiner 1997).

What is needed to capture the social and economic experience of family day care providers is an approach which is able to catch the common interest of women in general, but also allows asking questions about differences between groups of women. It is the unique position of family day care in the public/private triangle of public policy, private/public market and private location that needs a framework allowing not losing track of these double dualisms of private and public. Sometimes it has been claimed that the boundaries between the public and the private domains are crumbling (e.g. Ungerson 1997) or that the meaning of these concepts are shifting constantly and ambiguously, rendering them difficult to use (Ribbens and Edwards 1995). Yet I believe that concepts of the private and the public sphere are useful in uncovering the roots of possible conflicts for individuals and between social actors. The concepts of the private and the public remain also useful for highlighting gender inequalities. This continues to be the case even if an evaluation of the public/private division as the mechanism for oppressing or exploiting women is not shared.

Housewife and mother: work and care

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* are working at home and provide a service replacing (mothers') care – an activity firmly based in the private home. In general the experience of raising children as a mother is accepted as significant expertise to register as providing this service. The work of a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* is work because she is paid to do so. Yet the established (colloquial) title *Tagesmutter* (day mother) offers a clear indication for another position of this work. It is likened to the activities and tasks of a mother and it is women's work. To conceptualise the (private) activities of housewives and mothers as work has been more controversial.

Is it work? Conceptualisations

The domestic labour debate in the mid 1970s conceptualised housework and social reproduction as work and tried to place this women's work in terms of Marxist theories of exploitation. One of the effects of the largely theoretical domestic labour debate was that consequent studies of domestic labour and studies of motherhood could not ignore a conceptualisation of housework and childcare as work (Bubeck 1995; Gardiner 1997). Oakley's (1974) empirical work was ground breaking, because it firmly declared the activities of housewives to be work. In order to explore women's experience of

housework and their satisfaction with it she used a theoretical framework borrowed from industrial research. Housework was explored according the experiences of monotony, fragmentation and excessive pace in work, as well as social interaction patterns. Additionally the aspects of working hours and technical environment were included (Oakley 1974b). The findings contrasted starkly with the romantic image of the caring housewife and mother, providing a haven in the heartless world. Consequently Oakley (1974a) demanded the abolition of the housewife role, the family and gender roles (p. 222). Not surprisingly, this impractical solution has not been taken up by women and men a quarter century on. However, an increasing number of women add other roles to that of a housewife.

Research focussing on women's experience of houseworker (Oakley 1974a; b) or on women's experience as mothers (Boulton 1983; Richardson 1993) has shown on one hand the intense overlap of both roles and on the other hand inevitable conflicts. A clear separation of each role, that of a housewife and that of a mother is not possible. For example, a West German study in the early 1970s did not attempt to separate these two roles. Being a housewife included the responsibility for one's child or children (Pross 1975).

The overlap arises because caring for children requires housework, for example a certain level of cleanliness of the place and clothes, shopping for groceries and the preparation of meals. The presence of children also influences how housework is done and may be the source of feelings of frustration by the houseworker (Oakley 1974b). According to Oakley (1974b) this overlap can take place in such a way that women identify childcare with housework. Three decades on, despite taking into account the younger generation's good intentions to sharing work equally, Franks (1999, p. 121) nevertheless shows that these are 'thrown out' at the birth of the first child to a young couple, and men and women are likely revert to a more traditional division of labour. Similar findings were reported from research on the domestic division of labour in Germany (Metz-Göckel and Müller 1986; Künzler 1994).

At the same time housework and childcare are more fundamentally opposed (Oakley 1974b). Housework is a never-ending chain of circular tasks that have to be repeated over and over again. Childcare has the long-term effect of making the mother redundant, that is that the child develops into an independent adult (Oakley 1974b). Additionally, contemporary standards of a clean and tidy house conflict with contemporary ideas of

child rearing. Children are perceived to benefit from being able to explore freely and from play (Richardson 1993) and they are 'messy creatures' (Oakley 1974b, p. 166).

Depending on the focus of research, conclusions about how much time is spent on housework and on childcare differ. There are also wide variations within samples. Oakley (1974b) did not differentiate between housework and childcare and concluded that the housewives in her study worked on average of 77 hours a week. The more children belonging to the household, the more hours the women worked. Piachaud (1984) concentrating on childcare stated that around 50 hours a week are spent on childcare tasks, where women provide the bulk of this work. Pross (1975) found that West German housewives spent 50 hours on housework and 21 hours on childcare a week. Allowing for the overlap of some tasks she concluded that the working week of German housewives was 60 hours long[2]. Research on the division of domestic work in East German families concluded the majority of mothers spent between one and three hours daily on housework and that with rising numbers of children the time spent on housework increased (Gysi 1989; Winkler 1990). Several studies in different countries have made use of time budgets (Meissner et al. 1988; Brannen and Moss 1991; Gershuny 1995; Ferri and Smith 1996; Baxter and Western 1998; Laurie and Gershuny 2000).

The most accurate way is to ask couples to keep a time use diary over a period of a week. However this demands a considerable amount of commitment of the respondents and this type of research suffers low response rates (Doucet 1995). Some tasks, like cleaning and cooking may be easier to express and note down than others, like listening. It may lead to an under-representation of activities which involve emotions and are inseparable from the person performing it (Himmelweit 1995). Another method is to present a catalogue of tasks to men and women and ask about who is mainly responsible for particular tasks and how much time is spent on each (Wheelock 1990; Laurie and Gershuny 2000). However, researching housework is not unproblematic. Particularly underlying assumptions that work consists of chores and that leisure is enjoyable make it difficult to define housework tasks (Doucet 1995; VanEvery 1997). Additionally it appears difficult to account for tasks that take place at the same time. For example, doing the washing up whilst talking to your teenager may be both a chore and a pleasure, two chores or just pleasure.

All studies show that women take on the bulk of both housework and childcare and also that responsibility for the organisation of housework and childcare tasks remains with women. The understanding that modern families would share paid and unpaid work

equally (Young and Willmott 1973) had to give way to the insight that men's contribution to domestic labour should rather be likened to a 'lagged adaptation' (Gershuny et al. 1996). Small progress was made over time when married or coupled women engaged in paid labour. Their husbands' or partners' increase of labour in the home showed some signs of 'ratcheting up' (Laurie and Gershuny 2000). However, the time actually spent on individual tasks varies considerably[3]. There are several reasons for this. The major explanation is the difference in sampling and possibly the choice of items. Including women who are employed outside the home seems to result in a lower average of housework hours. Without knowing, for example, what technical support for housework is available, or how far the next grocery shop is and whether the family has access to a car, a comparison of time budgets can create as many questions as answers, and insights in the working day of women and mothers continues to require clarification.

Care

By the early 1980s rolling domestic work and childcare into one became questioned. Boulton (1983) appreciated a sociological approach to the exploration of domestic labour, yet states, that perspectives of labour reduces the experience as mother to the experience of childcare mediated by her working conditions as housewife. Aspects that fall outside the categories of work satisfaction are neglected. Therefore she developed a framework that differentiates between 'immediate response', referring to how day-to-day activities are experienced and the 'sense of meaning and purpose', referring to mothers' feelings of being needed and the commitment they feel towards their children (Boulton 1983).

Similarly Himmelweit (1995) saw the shortcomings of calling unpaid work 'work' in that it neglects the personal and relational aspects of much domestic activity. She suggests a distinction between work, that can be learned and undertaken by someone else, and care giving including inevitably emotional caring (Himmelweit 1995). It remains unclear whether there are aspects of care that never can be learned like other work can be learned. An evaluation is hindered by not separating the location – private or public – and the relationship of care – by kin, friends, or others; paid or unpaid. Much analysis of care had analysed unpaid care in the domestic domain. This may have unintentionally implied that 'proper' care is unpaid – conflating unpaid care with kin (Graham 1987). By the same token, if building relationships with the cared-for can be learned, one needs to develop how best to teach or train caregivers, and who should participate in such education or

training. Yet, the image of caregivers who have some individual innate special abilities to care may play an important role in the self-concept for carers, paid and unpaid, trained and untrained.

It continues to be difficult to grasp care. On the one hand caring for a person is not separable from the work that is done for this person (Himmelweit 1995). On the other hand statements identifying the care for children and adults, or interpersonal work, as the core of domestic labour that becomes more visible due to technology (Gardiner 1997) implies that care can be identified by peeling away all the domestic labour that technology can replace. However, it is not appropriate to perceive care as an unchanging phenomenon. For example technological developments offer the opportunity to alter practices in households and may change the disposition of care (Silva 1999). Similarly to Gardiner (1997), Pasquale (1998) claims that of the tripartite role 'wife', 'housewife' and 'mother' only 'mother' is left – at least for the (West) German context. Pasquale (1998) asserts that this goes hand in hand with a 'professionalisation of mother work'[4].

Folbre and Weisskopf (1998) define caring labour as providing caring services by means of labour that is motivated by caring attitudes. This also limits caring labour to a face-to-face relationship. However, it does not restrict caring labour to non-market activities. It is possible to examine motivations for providing caring labour. They include altruism, a sense of responsibility, intrinsic enjoyment and informal quid pro quo. These four motives are likely to lead to care with the 'warm glow'. The importance of the same four motives also impact on the actual wage or reward received. Yet the motivation to care can also be based on a contract and provided for reward. Here self-interest looms large. Additionally, the cost of monitoring the quality of self-interested labour may be high, particularly when a third party buys the services (Strassmann 1993). The last motivation is defined as coercion (Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). Of course, carers cannot just be sorted into these categories. Motivations may overlap and, most importantly, may change over time. However, caring labour provided on the basis of the first four motives is in so far vulnerable because the preferences these reflect are partially endogenous, and difficult to sustain over time when reciprocity fails.

The attempts that have been made to separate housework from care have in common that they focus on the person who performs these activities. Bubeck (1995) suggests instead a focus on the person benefiting from these activities. When the recipient is not able to perform the tasks by him or herself, the work performed is care. It is important to point

out that 'not able' means, physically or mentally unable and not due to the structure of everyday life. When the beneficiary of the work performed is able to undertake the tasks by him or herself but does not, the activities are services. This approach allows a view of family day care as 'care' for children – at least with respect to some of the activities – but a service to parents. The shortcoming of this approach is that it hardly accounts for care beyond the bare minimum and that it sits uncomfortably with work performed out of love for somebody, who would be perfectly able to engage in this activity by him or herself (Anderson 2000).

The relationship between paid and unpaid work

Women's disadvantaged position can only be understood by considering the relationship between their role in the public sphere of the labour market and their position in the private sphere of the home. It has not been disputed that women occupy a disadvantaged position in the labour market compared with men but it has been explained from different perspectives. One looks at the human capital women develop and which they can or are willing to take to the market in consideration of their (future) domestic roles (e.g. Ostner 1993; Hakim 1996a). Hakim (1995; 1996a). argues that women can be divided into 'committed' and 'uncommitted' women. 'Committed' women invest in their human capital, take full-time employment and consider their working roles as more important than their domestic roles. 'Uncommitted' women drift in and out of the labour market, attach more importance to their domestic role and, are likely not to work or to take on only part-time work. Therefore personal tastes and preferences are seen to be more important than structural constraints. Women continuing to work part-time despite having left the childrearing phase, Hakim argues, confirm this, and she regards the claim of childcare problems as main barrier to the labour market as a 'feminist myth'. With the advent of effective contraceptives women bearing children is voluntary and therefore 'childcare problems are in a sense chosen by women who choose to have large families' (Hakim 1995, p. 438).

The problem with this approach is that it uses the description of the status quo as an explanation. Differences in power and access to resources between men and women are ignored. The position of women has to be examined in the socio-economic context. Decision about education and labour market activities, or about reproduction and the division of domestic labour take place within 'structures of constraint' (Folbre 1994),

which are reflected in women's general labour market position, the discrimination women encounter, contemporary views of childrearing and its implementation in the form of childcare provision. For example, some explanations look at direct and indirect discrimination against women in the labour market (e.g. Engelbrech 1991; Bynner et al. 1997). Here the accumulation of disadvantages can be observed, usually beginning at the point of decision making when leaving education. Engelbrech (1991) shows for the former West Germany how young women are channelled into 'female' occupations. Additionally, even in occupations that are not gender segregated men are likely to climb the career ladder more speedily and are able to increase their income faster than women. To a lesser extent, similar observations were made concerning women in the former GDR (Lötsch and Falconere 1990; Miethe et al. 1990; Helwig 1993a). For example, a study by Bynner et al. (1997) shows that women with children receive less work related training compared to men with children. Not surprisingly women reported less work-related skills than men. This in turn can be related to working full-time or part-time. Yet bearing of children and childcare responsibilities are reasons for women leaving the labour market and when returning often to part-time work and often in a lower position (Martin and Roberts 1984; Joshi 1991; Meyer and Schulze 1993). In Bynner et al's (1997) study the only skill mothers reported more frequently than women without children was caring. However, women with children were less likely to be able to utilise their skills in their occupation compared to men and women without children (Bynner et al. 1997).

All approaches have in common that an examination and explanation of women's behaviour always has to include her (future) reproductive potential and the social organisation of childrearing. A closer look at women's paid and unpaid work may show that the disadvantage of women, at least of the low qualified women push them into the provision of family day care. Nevertheless, there also may be women who are pulled into this kind of self-employment because they have particular views respectively about work and childcare. For these women, becoming a family day care provider may offer an opportunity within the structures of constraint.

> I left school on the Friday, started [paid employment] on the Monday. I'm still there, 28 years later [and work also as a childminder]. ... But I've changed my hours. I've been full-time and then I've been part-time as my children came along. And then I worked sort of, just mornings. And then, when my mum got really too old to look after my children, and I just felt it was too much for her and I went on to weekends. So that Brian [husband] was at work all week and I could be there for them. And then on a weekend, he had them all weekend, and I went to work. And we were like ships that passed in the night. But the children got looked after. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Laura's description of her work career illustrates women's adaptability and change over time according to perceived family needs. Over the last four decades the proportion of economically active women in Britain has notably increased. From 1951 to 2000 the economic activity rate for women of working age has risen from 34.7 per cent (Central Statistical Office 1970) to 73 per cent (Twomey 2001). Female economic activity rates are characterised by the effect of children on women's employment. Women with dependent children are less likely to be in paid work and those who are, are more likely to take on part-time work (Bower 2001). However, between 1990 and 2000 the sharpest increase of economic activity rates was observed for the group of women with dependent children four years of age or younger from 48 to 58 per cent (Twomey 2001).

Nevertheless women in the labour market are a diverse group. Although the increase in women's participation in the labour market is characterised by whether women have dependent children, there is also a strong influence of qualifications held by women. In 1997 67.2 per cent of women of working age were in employment or self-employed. Within this group the economic activity rate ranged from 47.5 per cent for women with no qualifications to 83.9 per cent for women with higher education (Middlemas and Sly 1998). In 2000 the economic activity rate had increased to 49.5 per cent of women with no qualification and 86.5 per cent for women with higher qualifications (Bower 2001). The data from the Spring Labour Force Survey 1998 showed that in the United Kingdom 54 per cent women between the age of 25 and 39 with dependent children aged 0 – 4

years were employed or self-employed compared to the 88 per cent of women in the same age group without dependent children (Thair and Risdon 1999). The Labour Force Survey shows that with increasing age of their children women are likely to return to the labour market, although never reaching the same level of economic activity rates as women without dependent children (Thair and Risdon 1999). This may be connected to other care commitments, for example for frail elderly people, coinciding with older or grown up children (Brannen et al. 1994), or to the domestic workload associated with non-dependent children restricting women's capacity to take up full-time employment (Ginn and Arber 1994). The combined impact of qualifications and dependent children becomes evident by looking at employment rates of women with young dependent children. Mothers of children under the age of 5 were more likely to be economically active when they had achieved higher qualification (above A-level) at 86 per cent compared to mothers without qualifications at 27 per cent (Thair and Risdon 1999).

The above differences go hand in hand with a noticeable shift of attitudes held by women and men concerning female employment and childcare practices. The traditional view that men ought to go out to work and women ought to look after the home has considerably diminished over the last 15 years. By 1998 only one in six women and one in five men held this view (Hinds and Jarvis 2000). This may be connected to a shift in attitudes towards the moral obligation of mothers. In line with the New Deal for Lone Parents which aims to encourage single parents to enter employment the opinion of men and women has notably shifted away from 'a single mother should do as she chooses, like everyone else'. Men and women increasingly believe that 'single mothers of school-aged children have a special duty to go out to work to support their child'. For the question what single mothers of pre-school children were to do there has been a marked polarisation of opinions. An increasing number of men and women believed that either these mothers should go out to work or that these mothers should stay at home, but a decline of men and women who felt it is up to the mother to decide. However, men overall are more likely than women to state that single mothers should go out to work at 51 per cent for the school-age children scenario (women 39 per cent) and 20 per cent for the pre-school age scenario (women 14 per cent) in 1998 (Hinds and Jarvis 2000).

Opinions about what mothers should do are informed by the aspired relationship between family members and what is needed to create family ties in which family members flourish. For example, in 1989 51 per cent of male and 63 per cent of female respondents

believed that 'a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work' (Scott 1990). Asking the same question five years later Thomson (1995) identified significant differences among women depending on their employment status. Sixty-three per cent of full-time working mothers, 34 per cent of part-time working mothers and a mere 9 per cent of non working mothers agreed strongly with this statement (Thomson 1995). Similar differences were found by both pieces of research concerning the question whether pre-school children suffer when their mothers work – men were more likely to perceive a negative effect on children than women, and women's attitude was connected to their employment situation (Scott 1990; Thomson 1995). More spectacular were the responses to the statement 'all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job'. In 1989 37 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women disagreed (Scott 1990). In 1994 over half of the full-time working women (52 per cent) disagreed strongly, but only 17 per cent of part-time working mothers and 5 per cent of non working mothers (Thomson 1995).

Women in the Germany labour market

> Then there was unification. ... Nobody would have employed me with three children. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

Women's economic situation in the unified Germany is more complicated and divisions between women in the new *Länder* and women in the old *Länder* continue to exist. Men and women in the new *Länder* do not have the same employment opportunities. Unemployment rates in the former East Germany are higher (particularly women's) and wages are lower. At the same time attitudes as to how to balance paid and unpaid work and childrearing held by men and women living in the old and new *Länder* differ too (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a). Considering that people grew up, lived and worked in two very different systems, this does not come as a surprise.

Reunification was a radical externally determined process in which West German regulations from the Basic Law to daily life were put on the new *Länder*, and not a single law of the former GDR had been taken on (Lötsch 1992). It appears that women in the new *Länder* are still bearing the brunt of unification. 'Progressive rights' for women were thrown out in the process of unification and are still labelled as undeserved privileges (Berghahn 1993). What may be called 'progressive rights' depends on the views of how

paid and unpaid work and care ought to be shared within society and within households, and on views as to how involved the state ought to be in this. Before we look at the situation of women in the new *Länder* let us have a look at how women's employment had developed in the FRG and GDR before unification.

Former West

Like other European countries, the former West Germany saw a steady increase of women's employment rates[5]. By 1989, the year before unification, women's employment rates had reached 50.5 per cent. Within this group, women living alone (not married, separated or divorced) were more likely to be employed than married or widowed women. Married women without dependent children were less likely to be in employment or self-employed than single women. Women with dependent children were even less likely to be employed or self-employed (at 45 per cent). Number and age of the dependent children impacted on the employment rate, too. It is remarkable that lone mothers (exempt widows) showed higher employment rates in all sub-groups. The highest employment rates in 1989 were for the group of never married mothers with dependent children between 15 and 18, where at least one child was in education at 83 per cent (Statistisches Bundesamt 1991).

The rise in female employment in the former West Germany has been linked to the extension of the education system since the 1960s and the changing economy. More pluralistic forms of households developed, characterised by an increase of single person households, a rising divorce rate and by the delay of childbirth. An increasing number of women was interested in establishing an individual career and in reconciling this with family life (Meyer and Schulze 1993). However, mothers' participation in the labour market reflects that women's continuous full-time work has never been a declared political aim (Lauterbach and Klein 1995). A simultaneous reconciliation of paid employment and motherhood was not envisaged, but rather a phase-model. Mothers who stayed at home would relieve the labour market, and the treasury, by making public childcare provision unnecessary (Berghahn 1993). Parents (usually mothers) staying at home with their children were supported by the payment of Child Raising Benefit (*Erziehungsgeld*) of DM600 per month[6] and child-raising years were introduced to the statutory pension insurance scheme (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a).

Former East

The former GDR was characterised by exceptionally high economic activity rates for women. By 1989, the year before unification, 78 per cent of women of working age (15 to 70 years) were employed; and, when women holding an apprenticeship and students were included this proportion rose to 91 per cent. At the same 90 per cent of women at the age of 30 had given birth to at least one child (Miethe et al. 1990; Trappe 1995).

After the Second World War equality of men and women was part of the initial political position in the socialist occupied zone. Friedrich Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums and des Staates* [The origin of the family, private property and the state, first published in 1884] and August Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* [Woman and socialism, first published in 1878] offered the rationale for policies to connect the 'solution to issues of women's rights' to the social issue of the emancipation of the working class and the construction of socialist relations of production. In practice the consequences of the war – destruction, lack of men, deprivation, starvation and poverty – channelled women into employment (Scholz 1997). In order to maintain women in employment following the initial years of hardship after the war it was seen as essential to free women from family duties. A wide-ranging network of childcare facilities was implemented by the state[7].

Despite repeated assurances since 1974 that the 'classical women's problem from the capitalist past' had been solved, gendered segregation in the world of work continued to exist (Neumann 1992). Women earned less and were less often found in leading positions than men (Lötsch and Falconere 1990; Helwig 1993a). Although legislation introducing special rights for women and mothers meant a significant relief for women, it also confirmed the traditional division of labour. In order to combine work inside and outside the home women compromised a lot. They restricted their working time, worked below their level of education, worked close to home and, considering their duties at home, did not even try to achieve leading positions (Helwig 1993a). By the same token women were often not considered for leading positions, because it was assumed that they would be more often absent from work than men (Miethe et al. 1990).

In the 1970s and 1980s the state took a new orientation. The experts had to admit that their women and family policies had not worked as intended. Indicators were that more and more married women changed from full-time to part-time work, the fertility rate decreased and the number of divorces continued to rise (Helwig 1993a). Consequently

more childcare places were created; woman's maternity leave was increased to one year's paid leave after the birth of the second child; parents could take out interest free loans; full-time working hours were reduced to a 40 hour week for mothers with two children under the age of 16; and mothers could take paid time off work to care for sick children (Adomeit 1988; Miethe et al. 1990; Helwig 1993a). This 'mum-policy' of the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) created the dilemma of how to support women in achieving more power within their (marital) relationship when, at the same time, women received more and more special rights (Anita Grandke, a GDR expert in family law, in Helwig 1993b). In the end a rather pragmatic stance was taken: since women were the ones who did the major part of domestic work, benefits and support were directly levelled at women (Scholz 1997).

After unification

Despite the failure to achieve equal positions in employment or equal division of domestic labour women in the GDR had learned to appreciate being economically active without attaching less value to (marital) partnership and rearing children (Miethe et al. 1990). Women's identity was based on both their public work role and their role in their family (Neuke 1994). The adoption of a market economy as part of unification hit women particularly hard. They lost free childcare provision and many lost employment in this service sector, as well as in other uneconomical companies (Neumann 1992).

Women's unemployment rates were higher than those of men; however, women were underrepresented in job-creation measures. In October 1992 64.9 per cent of the unemployed in the new *Länder* were women, but only 43.9 per cent of people in job-creation measures were female (Sessar-Karpp and Harder 1994). The trend has since moved towards a more balanced distribution of unemployment rates between the sexes (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Gender composition of the unemployed in the new *Länder*

	1997	1998	1999
Unemployed (1000)	1562	1638	1486
Of those women (per cent)	56.3	54.1	52.5
Of those men (per cent)	43.7	45.9	47.5

Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001b, own calculation)

Table 3.1 does not highlight the continuing differences between the labour force in the old and new *Länder*. The most drastic differences are the unemployment rates. In the former West Germany unemployment rates have declined to 9.9 per cent in 1999 (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001a). In the new *Länder* unemployment rates have declined too – to 19 per cent in 1999 (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001b). Another difference is that women in the new *Länder* present a higher proportion of the active labour force, however slightly declining, compared to women in the old *Länder* (Table 3.2). Additionally the proportion of the labour force in job-creation measures is considerably higher in the new *Länder*, at 4.2 per cent in 1999, compared to a proportion of 0.3 per cent in the old *Länder* (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001b; a).

Table 3.2: Women as per cent of the labour force in Germany

Women as per cent of the labour force	1997	1998	1999
Old Länder	42	42.3	42.7
New Länder	47	46.7	46.4

Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001b; a, own calculation)

A comparison of the active labour force in both parts of Germany with a focus on gender difference reveals that there is a long way to go before people in the unified Germany reach a equal economic position. Table 3.3 shows that the unemployment rate for men and women in the old *Länder* is approximately equal. Yet in the new *Länder* women are disproportionally out of employment.

Table 3.3: Unemployment rate of the male and female labour force, Germany

	1997		1998		1999	
	Old Länder %	New Länder %	Old Länder %	New Länder %	Old Länder %	New Länder %
Female labour force: unemployment rate	9	22.9	8.6	23.2	8.0	20.6
Male labour force: unemployment rate	9.1	15.7	8.7	17.2	8.2	16.1

Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2001b; a, own calculation)

For the generation who grew up and took pride in their paid work this must be particularly bitter. Although women in the former GDR also took on the bulk of domestic work and many suffered from overwork (Gysi et al. 1990; Miethe et al. 1990), to conclude these women would happily accept their lower employment rate and enjoy a domesticated life is wrong. A survey in 1996 showed the continuity of differences in attitudes towards work and family life between people living in the new *Länder* and the area of the former West Germany. More women in the new *Länder* stated that their occupation played the most important role in their lives compared to women in the old *Länder* (17 per cent compared to 10 per cent)[8]. More women in the new *Länder* preferred to work full-time than women in the former West Germany (59 per cent compared to 34 per cent). The question about the best action of women after having a child revealed that 49 per cent of women in the former West Germany would take a long break or give up paid employment all together, compared to only 23 per cent in the new *Länder* (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a).

Women's particular situation in the labour market in the new *Länder* invites a careful look at the structures of constraint for *Tagesmütter*. Women's disadvantages in the labour market and approaches to family life and child raising may represent different push and pull factors unique to the political and economic development of the unified Germany.

Both German and British women occupy a disadvantageous position in the labour market. However, a comparison of women's labour market position in Britain and in Germany shows some significant differences. Women's economic activity rate in the United Kingdom is higher than in Germany. In 1998 66.9 per cent of women 19 to 64 years old in the UK were labour market active compared to 62.1 per cent of German women of this age. However, women in the United Kingdom are more likely to work part-time (44.8 of all employed women) compared to German women (36.4 per cent). Additionally on average part-time working women in the UK work shorter hours. Women in both countries have in common that with increasing numbers of children women are less likely to be economically active. Another difference is the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate of women in the United Kingdom stood at 5.5 per cent in 1998, that is nearly half of the unemployment rate of women in Germany at 10.2 per cent (European Commission 2000).

Family day care and the household

Who determines the allocation of time between paid and unpaid work? On the face of it, this might seem to be mothers, but women do not take this decision alone. Internal and external changes, like the birth of a child, the loss of a job or the lack of childcare facilities may force a rearrangement of tasks within the household and the link of household members to the labour market (Oughton et al. 1997). This involves the use and further development of complex sets of rules, governing behaviour, influenced by different power potentials of individual members (Anderson et al. 1994). When either the woman or the man (or both) hold traditional values concerning household work strategies women's participation in the labour force is low (Laurie and Gershuny 2000). Attitudes, for example towards how to share domestic labour, how to look after children and how to secure a family income affect these decisions (Scott 1990; Thomson 1995; Hinds and Jarvis 2000).

The care needs of children is the most common reason for women to work at home across all forms of home based work (Allen and Wolkowitz 1987; Huws and Korte 1990; Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995). In the case of telework this modern form of homeworking can be seen as a new opportunity for balancing paid and domestic work (Huws et al. 1996), or as the perpetuation of exploiting women in terms of work and in terms of domestic burden of responsibly (Haddon and Silverstone 1993).

More obscure is the role children play in household activities. Sociological literature concerned with childhood has shown that there have been immense changes in the concept of childhood over time (Hendrick 1990). Most of the time children were seen as developing individuals or 'units of socialisation', that is in need of parental care and education. Only recently have children been perceived to be agents (Hill and Tisdall 1997; Brannen 1999). Studies of the division of domestic labour conceptualise children as work creators, but not as providing domestic labour. It is not surprising then, that there are few empirical studies. An exceptional study of children's activities outside of school showed that "there may be a continuum, from children who appear to make no contribution to the domestic economy, to children whose contribution is total and on whom the functioning of the household may depend, with the majority making contributions that fall somewhere in between the two extremes" (Morrow 1996, p. 61). When there is an interest in children's contribution girls supply more domestic labour

(Wheelock 1990; Morrow 1996), however negligible the actual contribution is (Wheelock 1990).

The reason for the small amount of domestic labour undertaken by children may be seen as due to the fact that their chores have the purpose of training children, not to support their parents (Zelizer 1985) and that girls' performance of housework can be likened to an apprenticeship preparing them for their future role as housewife (Oakley 1974a). This stance implies that children's unpaid work is not taken seriously as part of the domestic economy, and 'priceless' children are perceived as economically 'worthless' (Zelizer 1985). When this is given it appears more likely that children's contribution is presented in passing, as a minor aspect of the division of domestic labour (Morris 1990).

Another area that appears to be under researched is children's participation in household decisions. Quite obviously children's ability to take part in decisions depends on their age and on their understanding of the issues concerned. A useful framework for examining children's impact on their mothers' work as family day care providers is offered by Hart's metaphor of the ladder of participation (1992; 1997). The ladder is divided into three bottom rungs (manipulation, decoration and tokenism) presenting non-participation and the top-part of the ladder describing the degree of participation. The degrees of participation includes the rungs assigned but informed; consulted and informed; adult-initiated; shared decisions with children; child initiated and directed; and as the top-rung, child-initiated, shared decisions with adults. It ranges from children's opportunity to adapt to a new situation because they received information about it before it occurred to being able to initiate change.

Money in the household

Women's decision on labour market participation is, of course linked to the income situation of the household. In the face of economic change women have shown great flexibility to cushion households (Sande 1997; Wheelock 1997). Yet women's decision on paid work is also affected by how household income is used and shared among members. As the concept of the 'family wage' continues to exert covert influence over gendered labour market positions (Folbre 1994) it also affects the meanings attached to money within the household. The ideal of a 'family wage' earned by husbands and fathers defines women's wages as supplementary and ultimately dispensable, or as a form of earned 'pin-money' (Zelizer 1994). This has particular consequence for women in

households where the income earned by the husband is far from a wage that sustains a family.

Rearing children renders a household vulnerable to poverty. In 1997/98 one in three English children lived in poverty (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001). The Children and Youth Report of 1998 states that children in Germany are two times more in danger of suffering poverty than adults. Providing for children is expensive, and opportunity costs in form of women's forgone income impact on young families. Not surprisingly many families in Britain feel they would struggle without the female wage (Stubbs and Wheelock 1990; Main 1994; Kiernan et al. 1998) and research into women's attitudes found that 45 per cent of working women stated that they need to earn money to buy essentials (Jarvis et al. 2000). Also research on the impact of Child Benefit, another source of household income usually paid to women, has shown that however small the amount received it is valued highly by women and men. It is a reliable source of income and tides them over. It gives women an independent source of income and allows mothers to spend money on their children (Bradshaw and Stimson 1997).

Knowledge about household income levels does not inform us about the money available to women, who in the household takes financial decisions and who manages money, nor about who spends the money and who benefits from goods and services bought (Pahl 1989; 1990; Vogler 1994). When the 'black box' household was opened the processes lying between earning and spending turned out to be gendered, translating the inequalities of the wider society into inequalities within the household and vice versa (Pahl 1990; Vogler 1994; Wheelock and Mariussen 1997). Moving away from a gender blind approach may reveal that (married) women live in poverty within households when husbands are not willing to share (Stiegler 1998), when women bear the brunt of the lack of resources or a combination of both. Men tend to keep a larger proportion of the household income as personal spending money (Pahl 1989; Vogler 1994; Goode et al. 1998) or the allowance for housekeeping allocated to women is inadequate[9]. One reason for the latter was that men were not closely involved in the financial management of the household and therefore less aware of the costs of running a household (Parker 1992). When a woman is not aware of the exact amount of income her partner commands she cannot know if her household is eligible for benefits (Lister 1992). Another reason why the money available to women is short is debts incurred by their husbands unknown to women (Parker 1992; Goode et al. 1998).

In households with low income frequently women carry the burden of managing the limited resources (Pahl 1989; Vogler 1994). These findings were echoed by research on housewives in the former West Germany (Pross 1975). Women find themselves in situations where they have to balance the financial interests of the household and health issues of individual members (Graham 1992). Women who only have an inadequate amount of money at their disposal are more likely than men to 'go short' of essentials (Goode et al. 1998). This can take the form of skipping meals or leaving the best bits to husband and children; of refraining from buying essential pieces of clothing for themselves or buying their own clothes in second-hand shops and of turning off the heating when the children are in bed (Graham 1992; Vogler 1994; Eardley and Corden 1996; Goode et al. 1998). Economising expenditure on food, clothes and fuel in this way and in general is made more difficult, as the authors point out, when, for example, husbands insist on their 'privilege' of a warm house; children insist on wearing designer clothes and husbands are perceived to be in need of a 'proper meal'[10]. Women managing inadequate family budgets experience this as a stressful burden and it can affect their health (Pahl 1989; Graham 1992; Goode et al. 1998).

Another indicator of equality within households is the amount of personal spending money available to individuals. Men tend to spend more money on leisure (Pahl 1989; 1990; Goode et al. 1998). When women derive pleasure from spending money on their children their husbands have interpreted this as an indication of personal spending, instead of collective expenditure. Husbands in the same piece of research justified their personal spending (e.g. on a home computer) with the improvement of their labour market prospects or the learning opportunities for their children (Goode et al. 1998). These examples are clear indicators of gendered power relations in operation, suggesting that "the altruist is more likely to be female than male" (Pahl 1995, p. 375). They also suggest women's and mothers' motivation for entering the labour market.

The financial situation of female household members in the new *Länder* was affected by the consequences of unification. Most of the women taking part in this research grew up in the former GDR as daughters of working mothers, in a country where 85 per cent of the costs of raising children was carried by the state, and who had expected to earn a living – independent of their parental status (Bast and Ostner 1992). The concept of a family wage paid to working men with the implication that women provided unpaid domestic work and care was not part of the socialist employment or family policy.

Unification applied a legal framework that had developed with a clear commitment to the traditional family in which at the point of marriage women and men entered a 'gender contract'. Men are expected to become family breadwinners and women expected to be financially cared for by their husbands (Erler et al. 1988) and prefered to live in a modernised form of the traditional breadwinner marriage, that can be described as the 'reconciliation model' where mothers work part-time, or return to the labour market after the child-raising years (Pfau-Effinger 1998)[11]. These forms of household strategies have consequences for women's access to money. Although nearly all housewives in the former West Germany claimed to have access to the family's income and a third of women commanded the same amount of pocket money as their husbands many women admitted to 'old methods of small deceptions' for personal spending opportunities (Pross 1975)[12]. One consequence of unification for women in the former GDR was that their financial independence from men was reduced by high female unemployment rates in the new *Länder.* Women's position within the family and within society was weakened at the same time as the male role of breadwinner was enhanced (Schröder 1994; Meyer and Schulze 1995; 1998). The development in the unified Germany clearly emphasises the power relationships within the household that constrains women into the labour markets.

Policies

Becoming a mother requires that women who had formerly made a decision whether to participate in the labour market may now have to find a balance between the new task and paid work or income dependency. They may emphasise their role as mother, their role as worker or attempt to integrate both (Duncan and Edwards 1999). On the practical side they have to decide whether they want to work full-time, part-time or not work in the labour market at all (Dex and Joshi 1999). Whether they find corresponding employment opportunities is a different matter. These possible positions may be encouraged or discouraged by the implementation of policies, depending whether mothers are perceived as 'citizens-the-carer' or 'citizens-the-wage-earner' (Lister 1999), and are affected by 'family' policies. It has been argued that it is less clear what 'family' policies are, whether it is a field of policies or whether it ought to be seen as a perspective. The latter allows examination of the effects on families of policies, independent from the label 'family policy'[13]. The following section will describe some of the most important policies

influencing mothers' employment behaviour in England and in Germany. This is the final piece of the jigsaw of constraints.

Britain

Since the new Labour government came into power the programme of social policy reform has advanced at a 'dizzying pace' (Rake 2001). The British government emphasises – in common with Germany – marriage as the 'most reliable framework for raising children' (Home Office 1998, p. 30). There is a strong emphasis on citizens' duties to engage in paid work (Department of Trade and Industry 2000; McKie et al. 2001; Rake 2001). Concerning parents this is also connected to the government's commitment to abolish child poverty (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001) and has been reflected in a variety of policies.

From October 2000 low and middle-income families can claim Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) including Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC). This benefit replaces Family Credit and is, like its predecessor, based on the family income. It creates a strong incentive for one earner to participate in the labour market, but is more likely to act as a disincentive for a second earner: a second income may fall above the earnings disregard and is more likely incur childcare costs. Although up to 70 per cent of childcare costs are subsidised by the CCTC, the remaining 30 per cent to be paid by parents may prove crucial. Additionally only childcare costs up to £100 for one child or £150 for two children are subsidized (Rake 2001). With that this policy's contribution to another confessed government objective, equal opportunities may score rather low (Gray 2001).

There have been important improvements of maternity leave governed by the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999. From July 1999 women are entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave independent of their length of employment. Women who have been continuously employed for more than one year are entitled to 29 weeks of maternity leave. During the first six weeks women receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) of 90 per cent of their average income. Thereafter mothers are entitled to the flat-rate Maternity Allowance (MA) of £60.20 (rate from April 2001) for another 12 weeks. The extended period of maternity leave does not include an extension of Maternity Allowance. Women who are not eligible for SMP may be eligible for up to 18 weeks MA, depending on length of employment and whether National Insurance contributions were paid (Williams and Phillips 2000; Department of Social Security 2001).

From December 1999 working parents in the UK gained a new right: paternity leave. This is included in the basic right for each parent to take up to 13 weeks leave (on the condition of a minimum of one year's continuous employment) but is unpaid. Parents can take no more than four weeks parental leave in respect of any individual child during a particular year (Williams and Phillips 2000). Additionally employees gained the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of unpaid emergency leave. This is not only geared towards the care of children, but may include partners or elderly parents. What constitutes a 'reasonable' amount of time off is not further specified (Williams and Phillips 2000).

The New Deal for Lone Parents invites lone parents not engaged in the labour market to annual interviews with the purpose to offer support and guidance. To attend this interview is not (yet) compulsory. Compared to other New Deal Programmes which are geared towards young people or long-term unemployed, not surprisingly, women are over represented (Rake 2001). Contemporary discussions about lone parents and their labour market participation show a strange absence of the benefit for children derived from parental care and authority (McKie et al. 2001).

Since 1997 the new Labour government has raised the universal Child Benefit by 29 per cent for the first child and 5 per cent for the second and subsequent children (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001). Parents now receive £15.50 per week for the first child and £10.35 for subsequent children. Depending whether children stay in full-time education or training this benefit is paid for children up to 19 years of age.

Germany

Esping-Andersen (1990) classified Germany as 'conservative-corporate' welfare state regime. Conservative welfare state regimes are those where state welfare maintains and reinforces existing class structures based on a conservative definition of social rights and obligations. Social Security is based in a system of compulsory social insurance contributions and is based firmly on a principle of status maintenance (Wilson 1993). It offers strong financial and social support for children and encourages child rearing at home by one of the two parents (Trzcinski 2000). The married couple household is seen as best suited for bringing up children (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998b). The German state offers strong incentives for women to curtail their labour market participation by a variety of policies. Tax regulations and pension

insurance regulations reward families where one partner stays at home, usually the wife (Stiegler 1998, see also endnote 10 this chapter).

Employed mothers have the right to take paid maternity leave from six weeks before the expected date of birth to eight weeks after the date of birth (12 weeks after a multiple or premature birth). During the maternity protection period, eligible mothers receive a maternity allowance of the previous net-wage, made up from contributions of the statutory health insurance systems and payments of the employer. For the eight or twelve week leave period after the birth, employment is absolutely forbidden (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a).

Parents are entitled to Child Raising Leave for up to three years which includes job-protection. During the first six month a flat rate of DM 600 Child Raising Benefit per month is paid to all parents. Thereafter this benefit is means tested and paid up to the second birthday of the child. Some *Länder* extend this means-tested benefit and make it available for the third year of the child's life. Parents can share Child Raising Leave and are allowed to switch three times. The parent receiving Child Raising Benefit is allowed to work up to 19 hours a week. If the parent's previous job is protected, he or she needs the permission of his or her employer (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a; Statistisches Bundesamt 2000; Trzcinski 2000).

Employed parents are entitled to leave for sick children. Each parent is annually entitled to 10 days for each of his or her children up to 12 years of age. During this time the parent receives sickness benefit paid by his or her health insurance scheme. For lone parents the entitlement is raised to 20 days per year (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a).

Single parents are able to claim a tax reduction for childcare expenses (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998a). Two-parent families are not entitled to this tax reduction. However, at present the government is reconsidering this policy (Trzcinski 2000). As long as one of their children is three years or younger lone parents do not require proof of their willingness to participate in the labour market (like two parent families) in order to claim Social Security or Social Assistance payments. When their youngest child is of pre-school age an engagement in full-time work is not expected. Child Benefit is not included in the formula employed to calculate the level of entitlement.

From 1996 parents have to choose between Child Benefit and a Child (tax) Allowance (Statistisches Bundesamt 1999b). From 2000 the rate of Child Benefit was DM270 for the first two children, DM300 for the third child and DM350 for the fourth and subsequent children (Bundesamt für Finanzen 2001). The Child Allowance was corresponding. Child Benefit may be paid up to the child's 27th birthday, depending whether the child is unemployed or in training or education.

Formal childcare provision

The kind and the extent of childcare provision have been seen as one of the major determinants of women's labour market participation. As with the development of labour markets for women in England and the former East Germany the development of childcare provision in the post-war period and after unification deserves a more detailed description. This is also important to the understanding of the institutional position of childminders and *Tagesmütter.*

Children need care and education. Care is needed almost from conception and evidently from the moment of birth. Children's need of education, which form it can or should take and at which age education is most beneficial is more controversial and public opinion has changed over time. The history of early years provision in Europe exhibits the interplay of concerns for children's well-being at present and in the future, and an interest in the education of children. The emphasis on welfare was raised when children's future physical ability to defend their country was perceived to be at stake. The concern for education showed an interest in children's future work roles and acknowledged that children are receptive to education from an early age. Any discussion of the circumstances in which children grow up or of children's needs also reflect different perceptions held by social classes (e.g. Tizard et al. 1976; Tietze 1993).

In the first half of the 19th century a child-centred pedagogy developed in both countries. Robert Owen (1771-1858) established the first work place nursery in Britain in 1819, guided by his intuitive understanding of the characteristics of young children (Tizard et al. 1976). Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852), a scholar of the Swiss educational reformer Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) founded the first Kindergarten (literally translated: garden for children) in Blankenburg, Germany in 1840. The second half of the 19th century saw a spread of Fröbel's ideas across Europe and into America (Grossmann 1974). Country specific characteristics, emerging at the end of the 19th century, continue to date to

influence the Early Years Services. For example, the comparatively young age of compulsory school attendance in Britain of five years, is leaving other childcare services to the private sector (Tizard et al. 1976); or in Germany the influence of the two main churches, Catholic and Protestant (Tietze 1993) persist to determine the landscape of childcare provision.

In contemporary Britain and Germany the provision of care is seen as the primary duty of parents as fixed in the British Children Act 1989 and the German Basic Law respectively. Traditional role allocation views fathers as providers in the form of breadwinners and identifies mothers as carers offering physical, emotional and educational care. Fathers' employment or self-employment is the fulfilment of their parental role. Mothers' participation in the labour market conflicts with their parental role and results in practical problems. Replacement care has to be found during mothers' absence. Despite some role convergence mothers' primary responsibility for the provision of physical and emotional care is seen as natural and feminine, and can be observed on various levels of social life.

Schools provide education in its most institutionalised form. Parents in both countries have the duty to ensure children's participation in education but are not expected to provide (school) education by themselves. However, since it is widely acknowledged that children learn and are educated before they enter school, but that the traditional school set-up may turn out to be ill suited to younger children, the responsibility for provision for under school age is less clear cut.

The following section examines what kind of childcare is available in England and the Northeast of England; as well as in Germany and in Rostock, a town in the Northeast of Germany where the fieldwork took place.

England and the Northeast

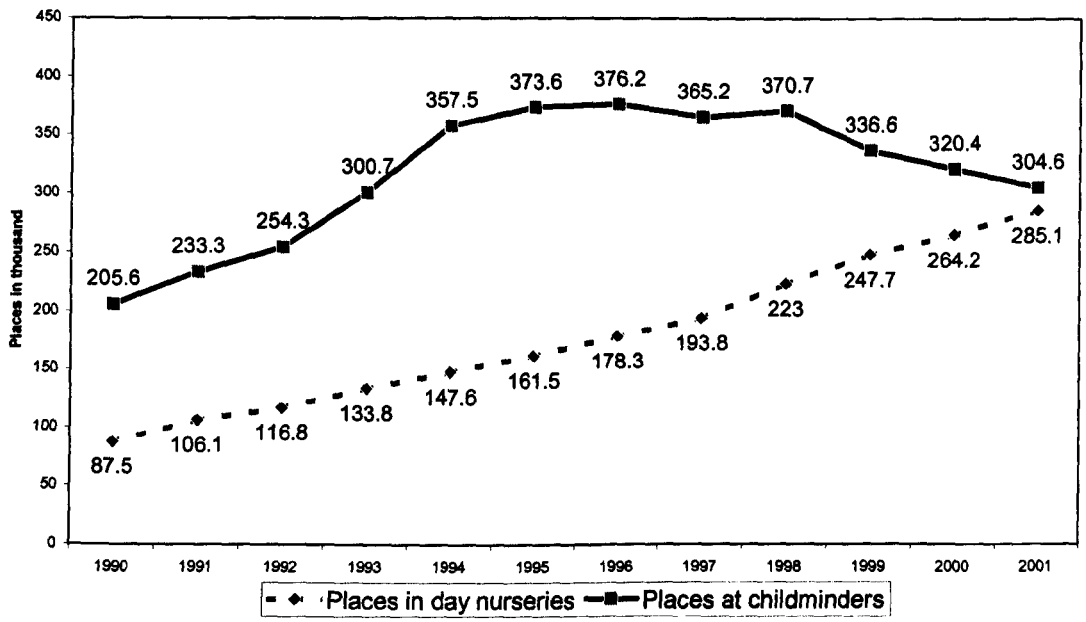
The traditional division between welfare and education has determined how early childhood services have developed (Moss and Penn 1996). Early childhood services in England are diverse and fragmented (Mooney and Munton 1997; Lindon 2000) and statistical information about provision and up-take are not readily available, if at all (e.g. Moss and Penn 1996). Now Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships are expected to close gaps in knowledge about childcare provision. The private, the voluntary and the public sector provide services. The British government funds two per cent of places for children under three (European Commission Childcare Network 1996).

Children in 'need' take up these places. A successful National Childcare Strategy resulting in more places available will also offer a wider choice for Social Services when buying childcare provision for children in need. Early Years Services provided by the voluntary sector (e.g. playgroups) receive government grants and are usually fee-paying. Private service sector provision is fee-paying and privately arranged between the family and the provider. Childcare takes place in private settings – the child's home (e.g. cared for by a nanny) or someone else's home (e.g. a childminder) – or in centre-based settings (e.g. day nursery). Children can find themselves using a variety of services (Meltzer 1994; Office for National Statistics 2000). Early childhood services are split into 'care' (day nurseries, playgroups, childminders and nannies) and 'education' (private and public nursery education).

Services are governed by different pieces of legislation and vary in terms of administration, objectives, and standards and regulations (Mooney and Munton 1997; Oberhuemer and Ulich 1997). This is reflected in a variety in admission policies, opening hours, staffing ratio and qualifications of staff. The majority of staff in Early Years Services are untrained or have ad hoc local training. A survey of 419 day care providers showed that most childminders had no relevant qualifications, neither did a third of playgroup workers or a fifth of staff in private day nursery (Moss and Penn 1996). Additionally the availability of services differs across England, leaving parents with little real choice (Mooney and Munton 1998)[14]. Parents working full-time who cannot or do not wish to rely on relatives and friends either have to employ the services of a day nursery, a childminder or a nanny; or have to put together a package of childcare provision, combining for example, nursery classes or playgroups with for example, a childminder.

Figure 3.1 represents the places for pre-school children available which, in principle, are full-time and, in principle cover childcare needs of parents in full-time work. Places may be full-time or part-time, may not be taken up or even not offered to parents. The statistics published by the Department for Education and Employment do not specify full-time or part-time places and are not able to indicate the take-up rate.

Figure 3.1: Places at childminders and in day nurseries in England 1990-2000 (thousand)

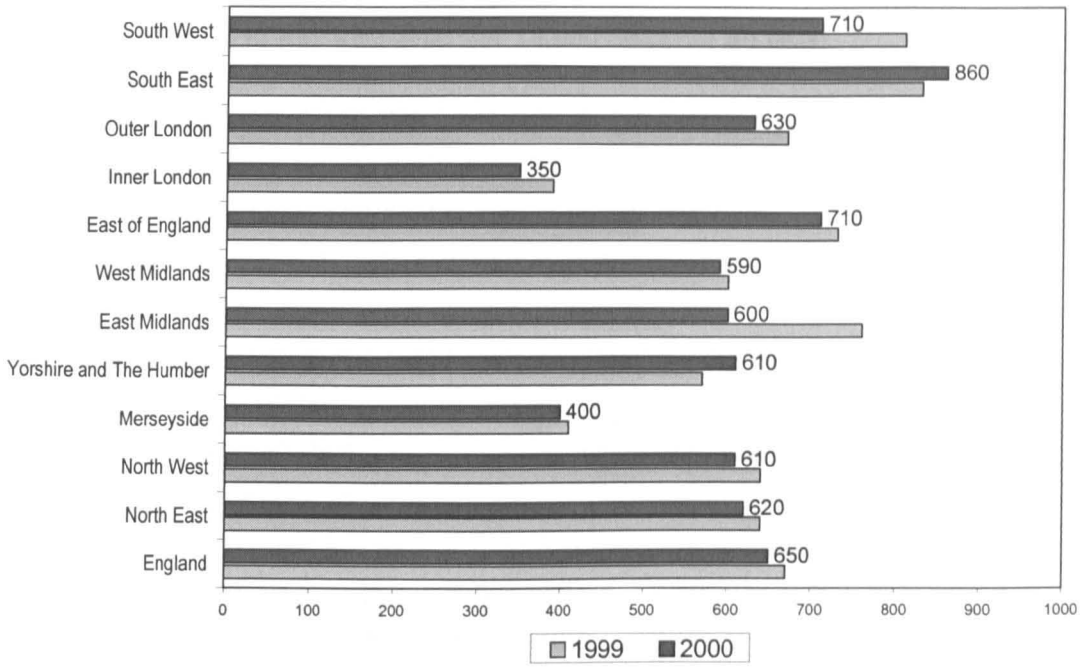


Source: (Department for Education and Employment 2000b), 2001 figures are provisional *(Department for Education and Skills 2001a)*

Figure 3.1 shows a continuous rise in registered places at day nurseries in contrast to places at childminders. Since 1998 places as well as the numbers of registered childminders have decreased. Between 1996 and 2000 the number of childminders decreased by 27,000 which is a decline of 26 per cent of the 1996 numbers. It resulted in 55,800 registered places for children up to eight years being lost. In 1996 a childminder was registered for an average of 3.6 children. In 2000 this average had increased to 4.2 children per childminder (my calculation, Department for Education and Employment 2000b).

The proportion of children which, in theory, are able to take up a place at a childminder (Figure 3.2) or in a day nursery (Figure 3.3) is small and varies according to area. In all but the South East of England and Yorkshire and the Humber the proportion of children who have access to a registered place at a childminder have declined. In 2000 the registered places cover 6.5 per cent of the population of children up to eight years. The North East covered slightly less than the English average at 6.4 per cent. Inner London showed the worst provision at 3.5 per cent and The South East the best provision at 8.3 per cent (Department for Education and Employment 2000b).

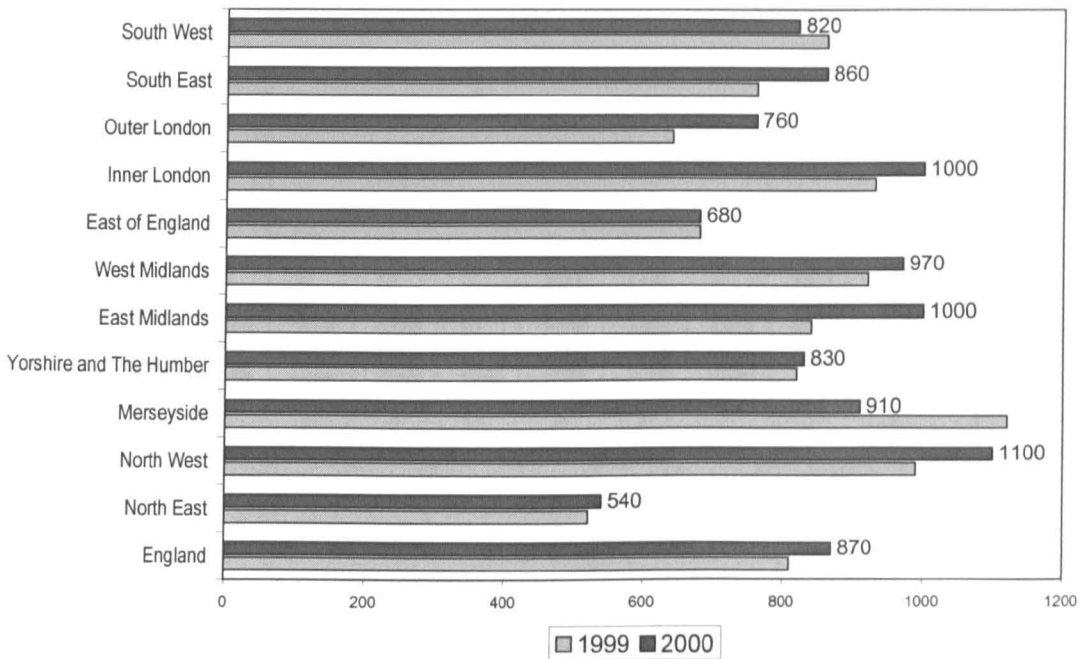
Figure 3.2: Places at childminders per 10,000 children (0-7)



Source: (Department for Education and Employment 2000b)

Nurseries provide for a slightly larger proportion of the under-fives population. Overall the numbers of places available have increased between 1999 and 2000 from covering 8.1 per cent to 8.7 per cent of children from 0 to 4. In 2000 the provision ranged from 5.4 per cent in the North East to 11 per cent in the North West (Figure 3.3). In all regions the proportion of children covered had increased but Merseyside and in the South West which suffered a decline and in the East of England where no change was observed.

Figure 3.3: Places in day nurseries per 10,000 children up (0-4)

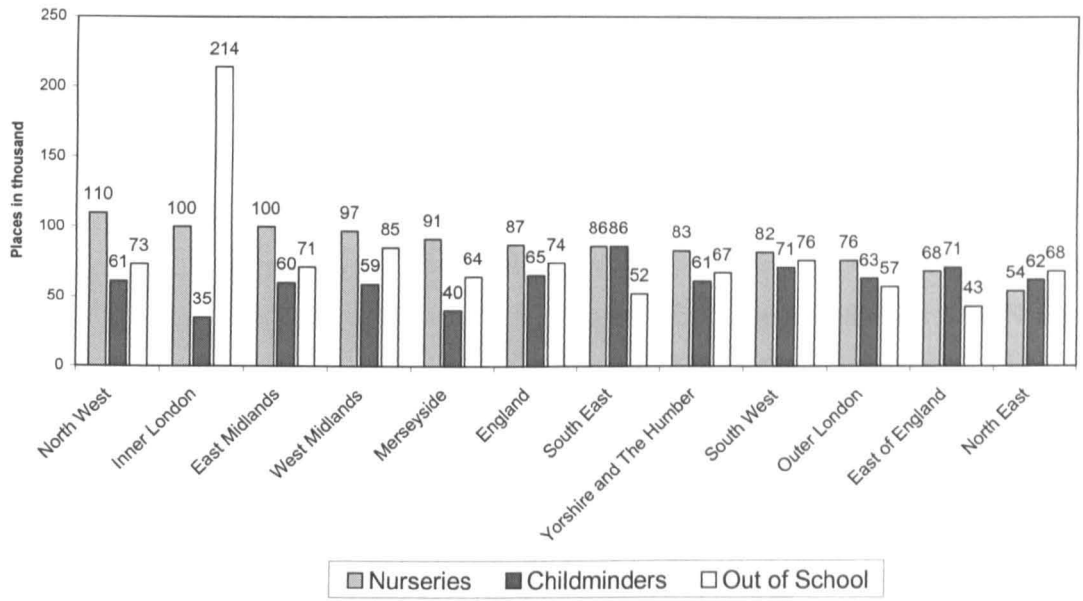


Source: (Department for Education and Employment 2000b)

The regions in which the proportion of the children's population covered by nursery provision did decline or remain the same all showed a decline in places offered by childminders, too. The two regions which showed an increase in registered places at childminders (South East, and Yorkshire and The Humber) also showed an increase in places in day nurseries (Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.4 illustrates the childcare services geared towards working parents. It shows the fragmentation of services within and across regions. As mentioned earlier, this information is based on registered places, that is the number of children permitted to attend at any one time. It does not offer information about how many children (and parents) make use of this service.

Figure 3.4: Places per 1,000 children at childminders (0-7), day nurseries (0-4), and Out of School Clubs (5-7) at 31 March 1999



Source: (Department for Education and Employment 1999b)

Which form of childcare is suitable to cover working hours of parents also depends on whether children enter primary schools before the statutory school age of five years and whether parents feel they are obliged to send their children to nursery or reception classes in their local or preferred school in order to 'earmark' a place. The proportion of three and four year olds attending full-time primary schools rose from 12 per cent in 1966 to 21 per cent in 1987 (Central Statistical Office 1989). This trend continued, between the academic years 1990/91 and 1999/00 the proportion of under-fives in schools rose from 51 to 64 per (Central Statistical Office 2000). A division of three year olds and four year olds shows that in 2000 37 per cent of three year olds and 56 per cent of four year olds had places in infant classes, also known as reception classes (Department for Education and Employment 2000g). A high proportion of the under fives are found in schools in the North East. Their proportion rose from 78 per cent in 1990/91 to 86 per cent in 1999/00 (Central Statistical Office 2000). However, the appropriateness of an increasingly earlier entrance to a classroom setting has been questioned (Moss and Penn 1996) and for covering parents' absence during working hours this form of provision has its limits (as has schooling).

When the research took place in spring/early summer 1998 the new Labour government was discussing policies to support parents' commitment of combining employment and bringing up children, and published a consultation document introducing a National Childcare Strategy for the establishment of high quality, affordable childcare provision (Department for Education and Employment 1998). It set out the establishment of free education places in schools for all four year olds – later extended to the aim to provide free nursery education to all three-year-olds by 2004 (Department for Education and Skills 2001b), announced money available to set up new pre-school and Out of School Club places and encouraged the development of good information services for parents. Early Years Development Partnerships had been established to deliver the National Childcare Strategy. Within this consultation paper connections to other government strategies were made. Early Excellence Centres were to provide examples of high quality care. Through the New Deal up to 50,000 new childcare workers were to be trained (Department for Education and Employment 1998). Both, childcare and education play a major role in the New Labour government's commitment to abolish child poverty. In the short-term parents', particularly lone mothers', employment is seen as the means to lift families out of poverty. This relies on the availability of childcare, and parents with low income will receive financial support to make private childcare affordable. From a long-term perspective poor early development and poor education are seen to be connected to children's future poverty. Schemes like Sure Start and Early Excellence Centres were established to counterbalance disadvantage (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001).

Within these strategies childminding and childminders are seen to play several important roles. Family day care is perceived to be professional, flexible, easily accessible, and to offer 'wrap-around' services. Childminders are seen as able to fill gaps before, after or between other childcare and educational services. Childminding Networks were to be established to ensure high quality care and education service (National Childminding Association 1998b; Department for Education and Employment 2000d). At the same time the opportunity to work as a childminder and with it the chance to launch into a framework of vocational childcare training was seen as a suitable strategy for lone mothers, making use of their personal experience and every day skills (Department for Education and Employment 1998). However, the falling numbers of registered childminders (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2) indicates that potential childminders do not share the government's enthusiasm for family day care. There may be a variety of

reasons. The introduction of WFTC including CCTC can improve the financial situation of families but does not necessarily filter down into a higher, more reliable income for family day care providers. Another possible reason is that potential childminders take the opportunity of earning an income outside the home and gaining the right to financial support in buying childcare themselves. Another reason for childminders to give up or discouraging women from becoming childminders may be the reorganisation of inspection of childcare provision. The Care Standards Act 2000, part VI brings day care and childminding regulation in England together with the inspection of early education. Responsibility for registration and inspection of childminders lies with Ofsted's new Early Years Directorate from September 2001 (Department for Education and Employment 2000f; National Childminding Association 2000b). Nevertheless the decline of childminders also may be connected to the aftermath of the conviction of manslaughter of children in their care of some childminders or other childcare workers working in domestic domains of (Coles 1998; Hall 1998a; b).

Germany

As we have seen, there was a stark contrast respecting the approach to women's employment in the former GDR and the former FRG in the post-war period. Both the former East Germany and the former West Germany had to find a way to distance themselves from the family and childcare policies of Nazism[15]. At the same time East Germany wished to break with the older German social policy and family policy tradition and West Germany strove to distance herself from the 'new' policies made in GDR (Bast and Ostner 1992). Consequently the provision of childcare differed too, reflecting and confirming contrasting ideals of women's and mothers' roles, presenting differing views about the socialisation of children and the responsibility the state took on for children's care and education. However, both countries maintained an age orientated structure of childcare provision. The institution providing care for under three year old children is called *Krippe*[16], followed by the *Kindergarten* or *Kindertagesheim* for children from the third birthday to the beginning of school age of seven years and finally the *Hort* providing care for school-aged children before and after school and during school holidays. A day centre may offer care for all of the above age groups, but maintains an organisational and physical separation of these three groups. This development took place in both countries. Just recently, after unification, a more flexible approach has been taken. Some providers are offering truly age-mixed group care (Oberhuemer and Ulich 1997).

Other differences were rooted in different political organisation. The former GDR had a centralised political structure, and childcare services also were planned and organised centrally. The former FRG with its federal political structure had established the principle of subsidiarity *(Subsidiaritätsprinzip).* It requires that the state, including the *Länder,* shall not assume functions which families or voluntary bodies can and should provide. Decentralisation and the principle of subsidiarity are reflected in considerable regional differences in levels of provision of childhood services.

West Germany

In the area that was to become the FRG attempts were made to pick up forms of social and political organisation left off before the war in the Weimar Republic. This included a traditional vision of the family with separate roles. Slightly exaggerating, the ideal of the three 'K' *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church) as the appropriate place for women, was reaffirmed. This approach identified no need for additional childcare provision. An extension of existing childcare provision was acknowledged as being able to protect families externally (i.e. the finances of the family), but could not outweigh the danger of weakening the social institution family from within, as expressed by the German Minister for Families Wuermeling in 1957 (Tietze 1993). The fact that 80 per cent of kindergartens were provided by the two main churches in Germany contributed to the support of the traditional model of the family (Grossmann 1974; Tietze 1993).

In the middle of the 1960s an extensive process of expansion and reformation of the education system was initiated. In this process kindergartens (although not being part of the education system) were included[17]. By 1970 kindergartens for children from three years to statutory school age were incorporated as the first level in the education system. It was the period when compensatory education was 'discovered' and kindergarten pedagogy moved away from Fröbel's framework. In effect this emerging emphasis on kindergarten care and education declared pedagogic tasks for childcare provision for younger children in the set-up of a *Krippe* illegitimate by default (Tietze 1993). The West German Education Commission stated that the family provided the best care and support for children under the age of three. Around the third birthday the kindergarten is the suitable institution to further children's development (Deutscher Bildungsrat 1970). Since the traditional ideal of the family saw women, if at all, working part-time, the provision of

childcare before and after school (where children were educated) in a *Hort* set-up seemed unnecessary, too.

By 1990 the provision of kindergarten places in the old *Länder* covered 69.2 per cent of all three to six year olds and ranged from 45.4 per cent in Hamburg to 91.1 per cent in Baden Württemberg (Statistisches Bundesamt 1992). The provision for children under three years of age was considerably less substantial. There were places for an average of 1.8 per cent of the children of this age group in the former West Germany ranging from 0.5 per cent in Rheinland-Pfalz to 17.9 per cent in Berlin (West) (Statistisches Bundesamt 1992).

It is unlikely that the places for children of kindergarten age were suitable to cover the working hours of their (full-time) working parents. At the end of the 1980s only 15 per cent of kindergartens offered full-time places. For most of the attending children a kindergarten offers a part-time arrangement (Tietze et al. 1993; Oberhuemer and Ulich 1997). Some kindergarten opened either only in the morning or closed for two hours at lunchtime. In effect the afternoon session is often not used (Tietze et al. 1993)[18]. Opening hours of day centres for under three-year-old children are different, due to the distinct definition of their task of supporting parents[19]. Of those 87 per cent offered services full-time at the end of the 1980s (Tietze et al. 1993). Parents have to pay for the care and education children receive in kindergartens. However, the majority of childcare providers are voluntary bodies, not for-profit organisations. Fees and available subsidies vary in the *Länder* and according to providers (Tietze et al. 1993).

Similar to the provision of places for children under three in day centres the provision of family care was rooted in an understanding of families or children in need. Family day care was until 1990 mainly practised as part of the foster care system (*Pflegekinderwesen*)[20]. Foster care was offered in the forms of full-time care (24 hours, seven days a week), week-care (24 hours, but not at the weekend) and family day care. By 1973 family day care made up 19.4 per cent of all foster care arrangements (Wendt, 1975 in Tietze et al. 1993). By 1990 this proportion had increased to 54.9 per cent (Statistisches Bundesamt 1992 in Tietze et al. 1993). The development of family day care distancing itself from fostercare as it was known in West Germany was instigated in 1973 by the article '*Wir fordern einen neuen Beruf: Tagesmutter*' (we demand a new occupation: *Tagesmutter*) in the well-known women's magazine *Brigitte*. '*Tagesmutter*' was a new term in Germany, borrowed from the Swedish model of family day care provision. This

article referred and contributed to the discussion of and the aim for supporting working mothers and to create a new occupation for women (Blüml et al. 1977; Tietze et al. 1993). It contributed to the distancing of family day care from providing care for children suffering a care deficit at home or in family emergency situations.

It was followed by a heated public debate whether care outside the family – provided by *Tagesmütter* – harms children. Children were seen to thrive best in the protected space of their family. Attachment theories as put forward by Bowlby (1953), were adopted by German paediatricians and psychologists (e.g. Hassenstein and Pechstein in Schulz et al. 1975; Blüml et al. 1980). Both argued that young children are damaged by an early separation from their mother. Childcare provided outside the family was only justified for children in 'need'. Another well-know psychologist accused the *Tagesmütter* lobby of 'downright seducing young mothers' into employment (Meves 1976). Interestingly the criticism was levelled against family day care, but used arguments against all childcare provision outside the parental home. Emmerling (1994) maintained the controversy was really about women's self-determination, since the same arguments were levelled against *Krippe* and family day care, and with that were not really interested in the welfare of children.

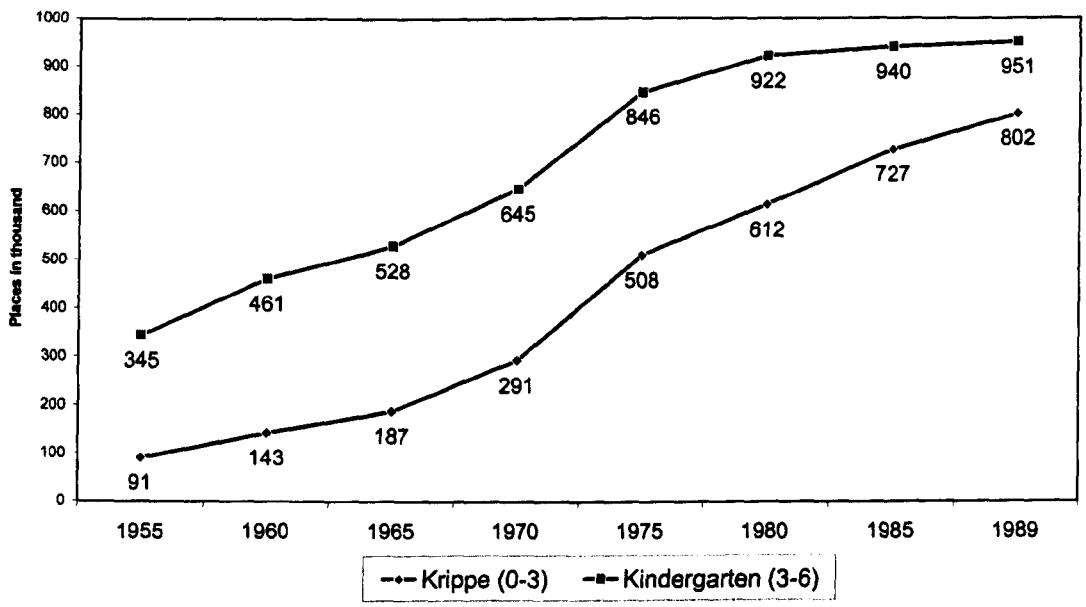
Another milestone in the establishment of family day care in West Germany was the pilot project '*Tagesmütter*' on behalf of the *Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit* (Ministry for Youth, Family and Health). Over a period of three years (1974 – 1977) a framework of family day care arrangements was set up, supporting *Tagesmütter* and parents in order to allow the DJI (*Deutsches Jugendinstitut* – German Youth Institute) to research whether family day care is harmful to the development of children below the age of three and whether the mother-child relationship suffers when children are cared for by a *Tagesmutter* (Blüml et al. 1977; Blüml et al. 1980)[21].

East Germany

The function of kindergartens, or day nurseries after the war in the Soviet occupation zone was seen in protecting the lives of children and to further their healthy development. It was viewed as a means to educating children in the spirit of antifascism and democracy, and of supporting working mothers, contributing to achieving equal rights of men and women (Krecker 1992)[22]. The *Gesetz über den Mutter- und Kinderschutz und die Rechte der Frau 1950* (Act of protection of mothers and children, the women's rights, 1950)

included the government's responsibility for the provision of childcare facilities, allowing mothers to participate fully in work and social life. The best possible condition for the healthy and comprehensive development of a child was seen in the combination and co-operation of public care, education and the family. This was organised by attending the institutions of the educational system (including *Krippe* and *Kindergarten*) and by supporting the family, acknowledging the importance of warm relationships between parents, children and siblings (e.g. Launer 1983). Development and expansion of childcare facilities were centrally planned and regulated. From the beginning of the GDR five year plans included concrete numbers of the expansion of childcare provision (Boeckmann 1993; Scholz 1997). Figure 3.5 shows the increase of children who had access to places in a *Krippe* or in a *Kindergarten* in the former GDR.

Figure 3.5: Provision of childcare places per 1,000 children in the former GDR



Source: (Statistisches Amt der DDR 1990)

In contrast to the provision in the former West Germany the places in childcare facilities in the former East Germany (Figure 3.5) were full-time places. Childcare facilities were open 12 hours a day. The places were free to parents, who only had to pay a small contribution towards food. Over time the most radical change within childcare took place within the provision for under three-year-olds. In 1965 only 56 per cent of the places were in day centres. The other places were week places (parents would collect their children at

the weekend), places in seasonal centres, or in residential children's homes. By 1989 96.8 per cent of places were offered in day centres (Institut für Medizinische Statistik und Datenverarbeitung, 1990 in Schmidt-Kolmer 1984; Boeckmann 1993). The emphasis of hygienic and medical care during the early years of the GDR (Niebsch 1984) was replaced by an interest in how to promote the intellectual and social development of children, too[23]. The *Programm für die Erziehungsarbeit in Kinderkrippen* [Programme for the educational work in children's *Krippe*] (Bachmann et al. 1986), first published 1985, offered a comprehensive guide to work with very young children, emphasising the individuality of children, the necessity to respect the personality of children, the need to cherish children and to take responsibly for the well-being of children (Bachmann et al. 1986; Weber 1996).

Most parents used childcare facilities and acknowledged their contribution to the care and education of their children (Winkel et al. 1995)[24]. It was appreciated that children were looked after by trained staff able to offer activities suitable for the specific age. Another advantage was seen in that children attending childcare facilities were not solely focused on their family (Gysi 1989). In general the availability of childcare for children under three was seen in a positive light, particularly the opening time of 12 hours a day and the medical care available to children within (Meyer and Schulze 1992).

Other forms of childcare outside the family were barely established or used. Parents seeking other forms of childcare were hardly supported. However, some private childcare was available and was suggested when no places in a day centre were available (Boeckmann 1993). A collection of women's life histories showed that the family or neighbours often helped with childcare, that women found ways to work at home or that they were able to employ a nanny (Szepansky 1995).

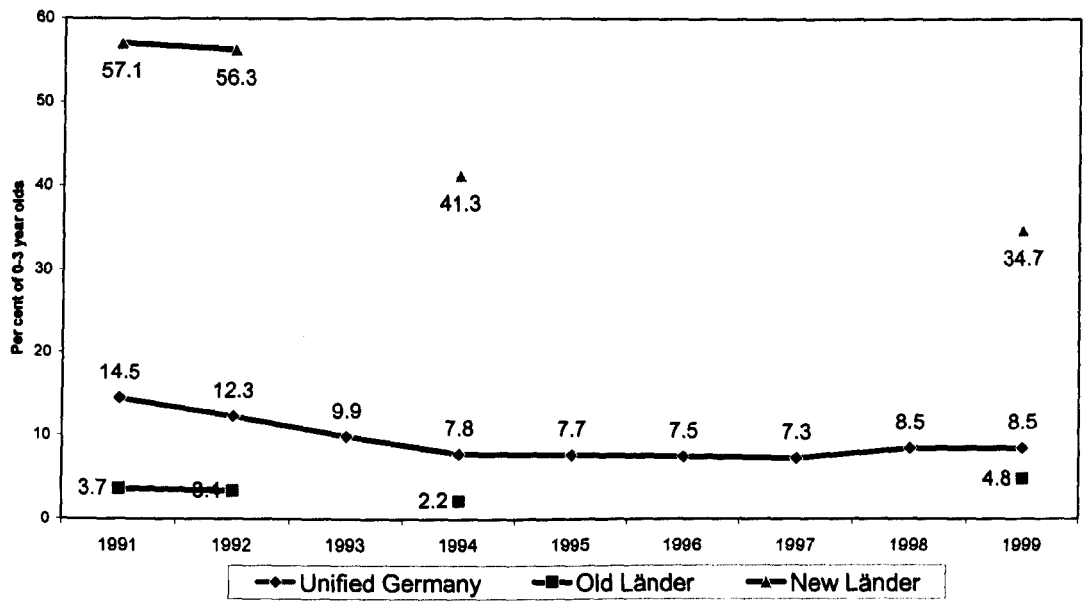
The Youth Report of 1998 for the unified Germany maintains that the socialist state of the GDR was not interested in and did not particularly like family day care because it was too difficult to control (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1998b). Clearly childcare professionals in the former GDR were aware of the West German form of family day care. They criticised the obscurity of quality when family day care providers are recruited through advertisement or within the neighbourhood. Additionally a family day care system, where 170 women looked after 225 children, as presented by the pilot project in the 1970s was evaluated as uneconomical (Schmidt-Kolmer 1983).

The united Germany

One consequence of unification in 1990 was that the new *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* – replacing the *Jugendwohlfahrts*gesetz (KJHG, Youth Welfare Act) of the former West Germany[25] – regulated childcare provision in the new and the old *Länder*[26]. With that childcare provision in the new *Länder* became subject to the principle of subsidiarity. Voluntary providers are given preference over statutory youth services. The church in the new *Länder* appeared to be more reluctant than other voluntary bodies (compared to the former West Germany) to take over childcare institutions. Differences in levels of provision as observed in the former West Germany begin to emerge in the new *Länder* (Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7).

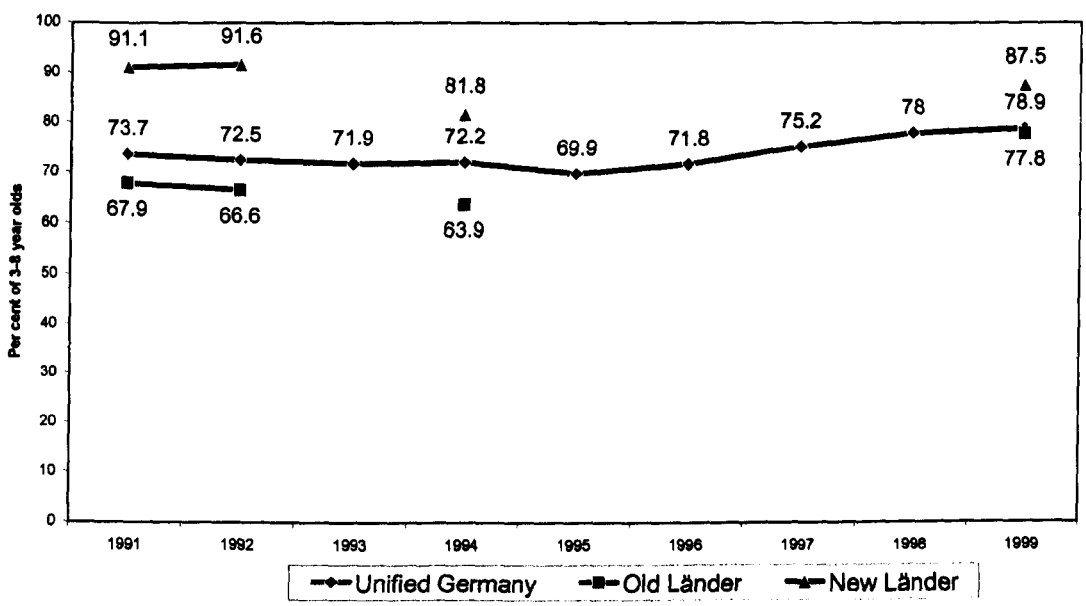
Childcare provision is financed from four different sources: the voluntary body, the parents, the *Land* and the local authority. Some *Länder* do not financially contribute to the provision of childcare for children under three at all. Others limit parents' contribution to a third of the cost of a place (Engelhard and Michel 1993; Tietze and Roßbach 1993). Despite a declared commitment by the new *Länder* to maintaining good childcare provision a reduction of places continues to take place. Some cutbacks of places were due to a decline in numbers of children in the new *Länder* on the background of demographic developments. The potential parent generation after unification was itself a generation of low birth rates (Engelhard and Michel 1993). After unification the new *Länder* experienced a significant decline of birth rates. By 1991 the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) had declined to 0.98 from 1.57 in 1989 (Statistisches Bundesamt 1994). By 1994 the TFR had reached its lowest point at 0.77 (Statistisches Bundesamt 1997). Since then the TFR in the new *Länder* is recovering. By 1998 it had increased to 1.09 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000). As reasons for delaying child bearing women stated the insecurity deriving from the economic change, the high costs of bringing up children and a general feeling of insecurity (Trommsdorff and Chakkarath 1996). The demographic shift towards a lower proportion of children was also due to young families migrating to the old *Länder* in search of employment. The slow decline of kindergarten provision is accompanied by a distinct decline of places for up to three-year-olds (Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.6: Germany: Children (0-3) registered in Day nurseries, percentage of population



Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000)
The gaps are due to the form of data disseminated by the Statistische Bundesamt

Figure 3.7: Germany: Children (3-8) registered in kindergarten, percentage of population

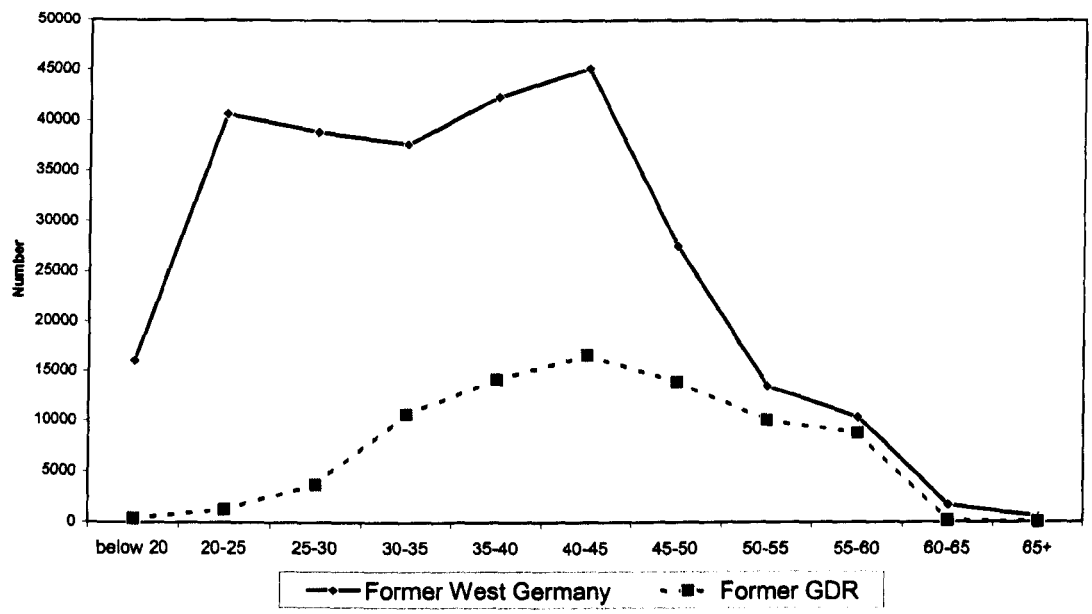


Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000)
The gaps are due to the form of data disseminated by the Statistische Bundesamt

The overall increase of available kindergarten places (Figure 3.7) compared to the overall decline of places in *Krippe* (Figure 3.6) is facilitated by paragraph 24 of the *KJHG*. From 1996 all children of the age of three have an enforceable claim to a kindergarten place. Considering the problems of provision the legislature allowed for a transitional period. However from 1999 a kindergarten place must be available for all children wishing to attend from the third birthday up to starting school.

Another effect of the closure of childcare facilities in the new *Länder* was that many childcare workers were made redundant. Decisions about individuals keeping or loosing employment were guided by the length employed and family circumstances. At the same time employment of newly trained staff virtually stopped. The impact on the age structure of the female childcare labour force in day centres and kindergartens is pictured in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: Germany: Age distribution of female staff employed in childcare provision 1998



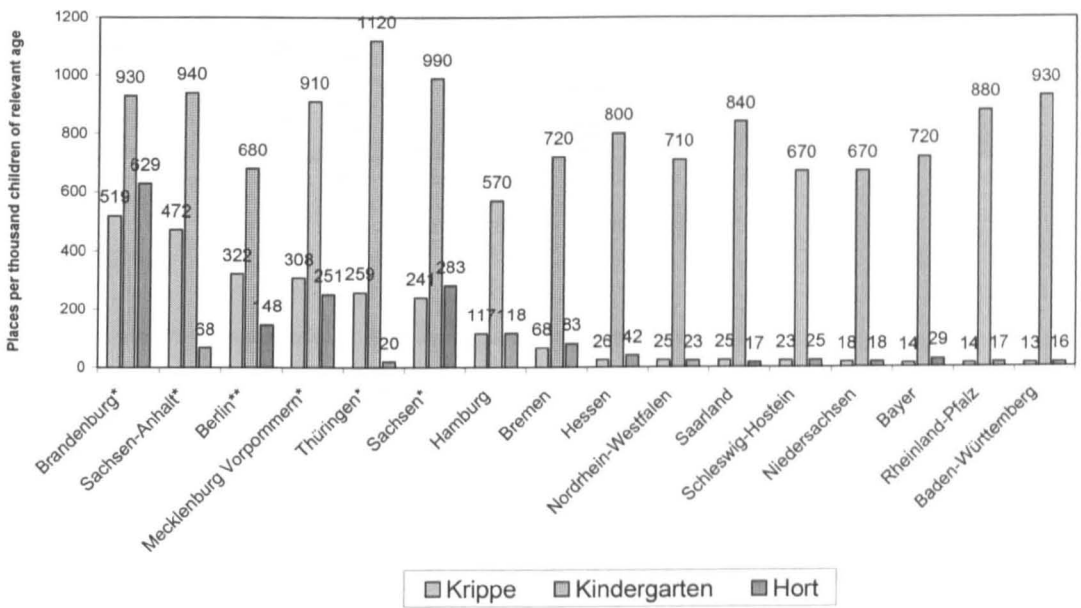
Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt 1999a)

Differences in childcare provision between the former East and the former West Germany (Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7) run parallel to different opinions about the use of childcare facilities for children under the age of three. In 1996 56 per cent of men and women in the new *Länder* were certain that it is not damaging for children under the age of three to

attend a day nursery compared to 32 per cent of men and women in the old *Länder*. Particularly younger respondents in both parts of Germany did not see any harm for children (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a).

To some extent the figures available for each of the *Länder* (Figure 3.9) is too generalised to draw a picture of childcare available to parents. Particularly working parents are dependent on childcare facilities close to their home or their place of work .

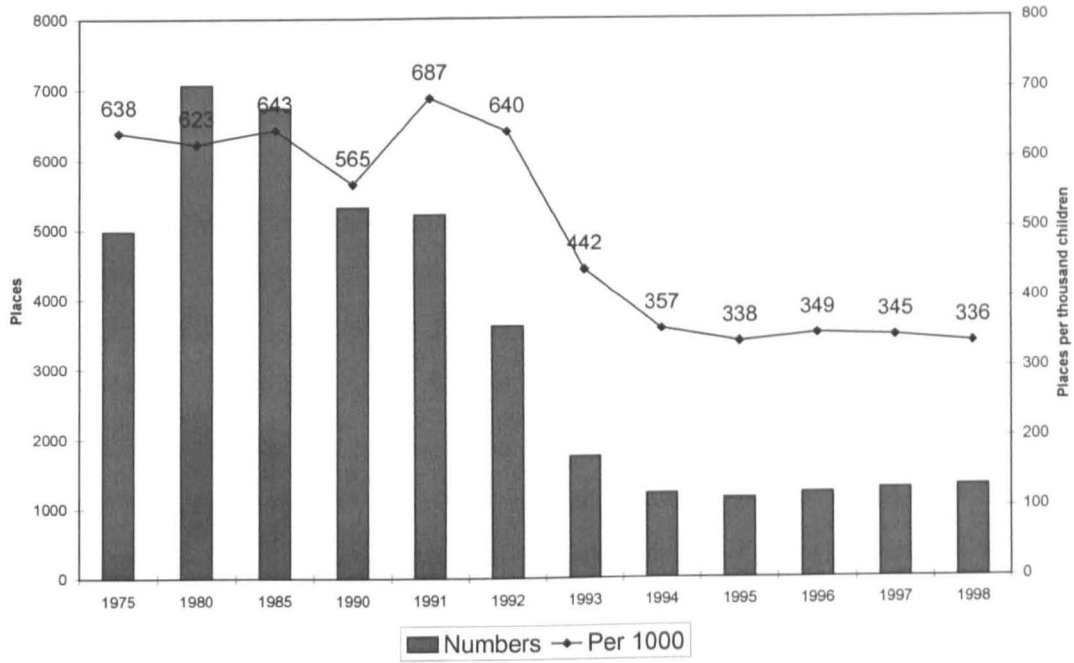
Figure 3.9: Germany: Places available in *Krippe*, Kindergarten and *Hort* as proportion of relevant population by *Länder 1998*



Source: (Statistisches Bundesamt 1999a)
*New Land, **Former West and Berlin, capital of former GDR

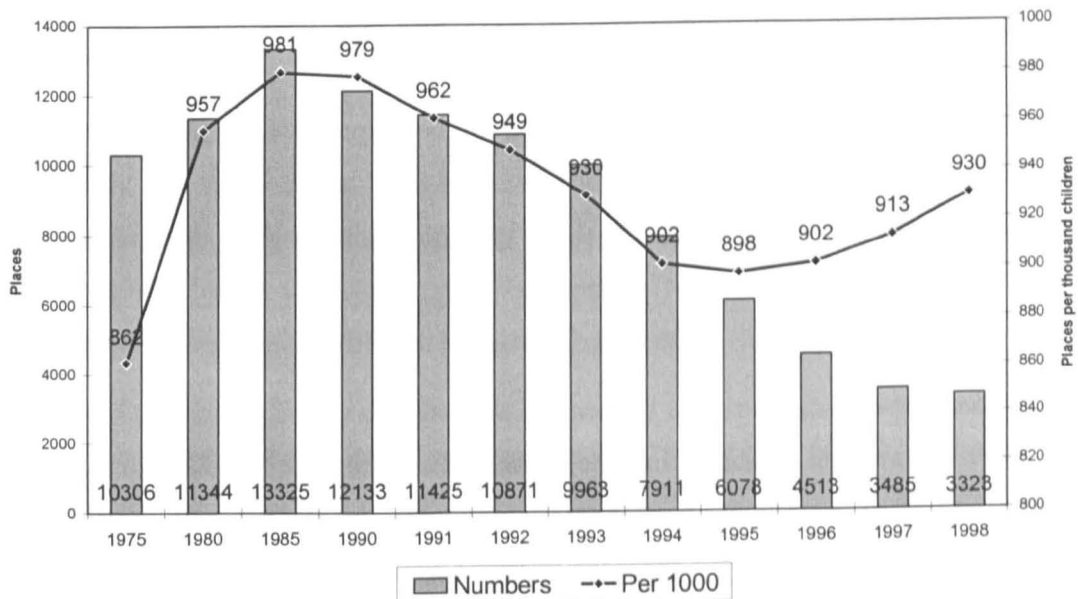
Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11show the proportion of the children's population in Rostock (area of study) registered in each form of childcare provision.

Figure 3.10: Rostock: Children (0-3) registered in *Krippe* and proportion of population



Source: (Hansestadt Rostock Amt für Statistik und Wahlen 2000b)

Figure 3.11: Rostock: Children (3-6) registered in kindergarten and proportion of population



Source: (Hansestadt Rostock Amt für Statistik und Wahlen 2000b)

The registration of children in *Krippe* and kindergarten and their proportion of the relevant children's population illustrate firstly the decline of childcare provision in general and in particular for very young children. Secondly, they demonstrate the deep dent in the population tree following the unification of Germany. Approximately a year after unification the proportion of the 0-3 year old children registered in Krippe shot up despite declining numbers of places taken up. For children 3-6 this phenomenon was less dramatic and lagged approximately three years behind. It is less clear cut because children of unemployed parents (or mothers) may not start kindergarten exactly at their third birthday. However, my interviews showed that there is a strong conviction that children of four years of age ought to attend kindergarten to gain social skills.

A new development is family day care in the new *Länder*. Since the *KJHG* ended compulsory registration for all family day care providers in Germany numbers of available places or taken up places are not available. The successful establishment of family day care in the new *Länder* depends on the commitment of the responsible *Jugendamt*, financial support and the presence of the *Tagesmütter* Association. Additionally it depends on the way it is tied into *Land* laws regulating the subsidy of childcare.

The introduction of family day care in Rostock benefited from the readily available subsidy of all forms of childcare, regulated by the *Land* law in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and from being chosen as location for the pilot scheme 'Qualification of *Tagesmütter* in rural areas with a focus on the new *Länder*'1993. The German Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth financed this pilot scheme. Its aim was two fold. Firstly, it was supposed to fill the emerging gaps in childcare provision particularly in rural areas. Secondly, women suffered particularly from loosing employment (including women trained in childcare) and it was hoped that a new source of – however limited – income could be created (Nolte 1995). It offered a training programme resulting in a certificate issued to *Tagesmütter*.

The first foot hold of family day care, as defined by the new legal framework, was that women who had provided these services before unification – however, without legal framework or even a name, as an interviewee explained – continued providing childcare in their homes. Initially family day care was accepted for children who due to medical reasons were seen as unfit to attend a day centre or where the working hours of parents were not covered by opening hours of day centres (Trimpin 1996). Overall parents in the

new *Länder* approve of sending their children to day care centres (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a), yet family day care may be enjoyed as an improvement of their choices (Hauser et al. 1996).

The comparison of childcare provision in England and Germany shows little similarities and considerable differences. The extent of childcare provision suitable to cover parents' working hours for very young children is similarly poor in England and the former West Germany. Women in the former East Germany can fall back on a denser childcare provision. Yet an important difference for parents having access to childcare facilities in the former West Germany and England concerns the kind of provision. In England these are usually private, for-profit providers. This affects which families can afford childcare. The newly introduced WFTC including the CCTC may alleviate the problem of affordable childcare. Albeit it is crucial that levels of payments are monitored and compared to fees set by childcare providers. In Germany the private market hardly plays a role in the provision of day nurseries. Additionally childcare places are subsidised with public money. A consequence in the former West Germany is that childcare places for children under three are mainly reserved for children from single parent or low-income families.

As children grow older finding childcare covering working hours of parents becomes more complicated in England and the old *Länder*. To comply with the idea of beneficial educational provision (nursery, playgroup, kindergarten) additional childcare that fits around these hours has to be found. Where childcare provision has been maintained in the new *Länder* it continues to be full-time, combining care and education.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped out and compared the structures of constraint women face in England and in the new Germany. There are some striking similarities. Women in both countries occupy a disadvantaged position in the labour market and women in both countries provide the bulk of domestic labour and feel responsible for their children. Yet in other respects they face a quite different situation. Most important are the different perceptions of childcare and the resulting childcare provision landscapes.

In both of the countries a structure in support for the traditional, male breadwinner family remains despite a combination of policies geared to supporting parents and to challenging the unequal positions men and women occupy in the labour market. However, positive

effects on women's labour market participation thanks to available and affordable childcare provision can be offset by a labour market that fails to offer employment meeting women's skills, or labour market policies that treat men preferentially.

This chapter has also shown the difficulties of defining 'care'. Care is often discussed as a private activity. Yet family day care providers are paid for their work. Their commitment to look after the children in their care is not based on kinship or family obligation. A more careful analysis of the motivation to provide care should be able to look at processes of the relationship between carers and cared for. This, amongst other things, is made more complicated by the caring triangle of family day care provider, child and parents and by policies defining and restricting business opportunities for family day care providers. It also leads to questions of the impact of pay on the care offered from the perspective of the paid childcare provider.

The following chapters will use the 'double dualism' of the public and the private, where market work can be labelled either as private or as public (Jennings 1993), to examine family day care providers' working conditions, their working routines and how they create boundaries between their private home and their public work. The next chapter looks at the paths that take women into this kind of self-employment.

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[1] The male childminding assistants filled out the questionnaire with their childminding wives. This resulted in the description of the working conditions of female childminders enriched with the information about their male assistants. Two of these childminding couples had children on their books. One couple was waiting for children.

[2] The findings are based on structured interviews administered to 1260 women in 1973 (Pross 1975).

[3] For example, mothers in the Australian study spend 'only' 13 hours a week on childcare (Baxter and Western 1998).

[4] It is supported by the fact that women increasingly gain formal and informal qualifications, often in the fields of pedagogy and education. Pasquale (1998) reports developments moving away from definitions of mother work mainly in terms of housework towards women who define mother work either in terms of an occupation or in terms of a profession (including delegating housework and 'occupational tasks' to others (like cleaners or *Tagesmütter*). It needs to be mentioned that the conclusions are based on seven interviews with mothers of families which had been contacted in connection with a childhood study (Pasquale 1998).

[5] The German statistical office provides women's and mothers' employment rates – not the rates of economically active women (e.g. Statistisches Bundesamt 2000).

[6] Converted into pound Sterling rates of 1998 this would be £214 per month. See also the policy section in this chapter.

[7] Other measures included opening laundries and hairdressers in large state-owned concerns.

[8] Fifteen per cent of the sample in the old *Länder* stated that their work is the most important area of life, compared to 24 per cent of men in the new *Länder* (Bundesministerium für Familie Senioren Frauen und Jugend 1996a).

[9] How seriously inadequate the money available to women for the task to run the household is becomes apparent when lone mothers said they were better off as lone parents than they had been when married (Graham 1987; Bradshaw and Millar 1991), despite the low benefits paid to lone parents.

[10] The 'proper meal' consists of meat surrounded by potatoes and vegetable, fundamental to the well-being of the family's members (Charles and Kerr 1988).

[11] Only since 1977 married men and women are treated equally in the eyes of the law. Up to then a husband could, for example, terminate his wife's contract of employment if he felt she would not fulfil her domestic duties. For the same token a mother who in principle was not seen as engaging in paid employment, could be forced to go out and work, when income earned by her husband was not sufficient to support the family (Berghahn 1993). Unification applies a tax law to all people living and working in Germany that rewards the traditional family (Stiegler 1998). A working married men and a part-time, low paid wife gain financially when each is entered in different corresponding tax classes. The higher earner pays less tax while the lower earner is taxed heavily. When married partners enter the same tax class, in principle tax allowances and benefits are shared equality between the two partners. However, it seems to be likely that the person in whose bank account the money is paid has greater control over it (Stiegler 1998). In both scenarios men appear to fare better.

[12] Girls of the post-war generation grew up with the knowledge passed on by their mothers and aunts of the *Schmugeld* concept. This is best translated as 'fibbing money' or 'fiddle money'. It opperates by either adding here and there a few *Pfennig* in the housekeeping book, by keeping the money from trading stamps or by collecting coins of one certain value under the guise of needing, e.g. 50 *Pfennig* coins for the laundry.

[13] For a more detailed exploration see Fox-Harding (1996).

[14] One aim of the National Childcare Strategy is to provide parents with the opportunity to choose between services (Department for Education and Employment 1998).

[15] National Socialism celebrated motherhood and the ideal of National Socialism saw women bearing (at least) four children to their husband and their *Führer* (Bien 1996) and childcare facilities were centralised and put into service of National Socialism's ideologies and its claim to power (Tietze 1993)

[16] Literally *Krippe* translates as 'crèche'. However, the meaning in England is too wide-ranging: from full-time day care provision to irregular, hourly care. Therefore the term *Krippe* will not be translated.

[17] The expansion of places in the early 1960 was taken up by the baby boom generation. In effect the supply situation with regard to all 3-6 year olds even decreased in 1960 and 1965, compared to 1955, but picked up considerably in 1975 to 56.1 per cent (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft 1990, Statistisches Bundesamt 1978, in Tietze 1993)

[18] In general a place can only be taken up by one child. This approach is rooted in the believe in regularity as necessary for children. Regularity in a sense of attending every working day and regularity in the sense of meeting the same group of children (and adults) is seen as beneficial to children. An approach to fill places according to the principle 'numbers of children at any one time' is a fairly recent approach taken in Germany – usually in connection of for-profit childcare provision and for institutions with extremely flexible opening hours.

[19] Day care provision for under-three-year-olds is indicated for lone mothers, who need to go out to work to earn an income, student parents, very low income families, or for children whose development would benefit from this kind of provision.

[20] In 1922 family day care received for the first time some legal framework in the form of 'The protection of day children' (*Schutz der Tageskinder)* in the *Reichsjugendwohlfahrtsgesetz.* The need to include the protection of children in family day care in the amended Youth Welfare Act (*Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz*) was not disputed. However, youth offices tended to treat family day care, as separate from foster care, as secondary and left it to parents to make arrangements (Arbeitsgemeinschaft tagesmütter - Bundesverband für Eltern Pflegeeltern und Tagesmütter e.V. 1992).

[21] In April 1977 there were 22 advisors, 167 *Tagesmütter*, 15 supply *Tagesmütter* and 250 children in family day care. The research took place in 11 different clusters in five *Länder.* There was some fluctuation of *Tagesmütter*, parents and children (Blüml et al. 1977).

[22] Consequences of the Second World War were extreme physical and emotional deprivation, separated families and orphaned children. The provision of care for children took place in immensely difficult circumstances, demanding a huge amount of improvisation and commitment (Krecker 1992).

[23] This change based on empirical, comparative work of and around Eva Schmidt-Kolmer of the Insitute für Hygiene des Kindes und Jugendalters (institute for hygiene during childhood and youth), Berlin (e.g. Schmidt-Kolmer 1982; Schmidt-Kolmer 1983; 1984). Before there was hardly any experience available of how to care for healthy children in institutions. Methods and plans had to be developed, staff to be trained and the co-operation between *Krippe* and parents established (Niebsch 1984).

[24] There were, of course, parents who were not satisfied with the care provided for very young children. Usually the criticism was levelled at early potty-training and strict routines (e.g. Fischer and Lux 1990). Often this criticism is presented as a discussion of socialist politics. From my experience of childcare worker in the former West Germany I cannot confirm that early potty training or strict routines were a 'socialist speciality'. Central ideas of *Krippe* pedagogy in Germany were obedience, cleanliness and order up to the middle of the 20th century (Beller 1992). Frequently the thoroughly planning of the work with

children is condemned or belittled as restrictive, indoctrinating socialist practice – harmful to children and childcare workers. This approach ignores the creative work of childcare workers in the former GDR, making use of the prescribed framework (Schmidt 1996) and gives away a chance to reflect on good practice in childcare.

[25] The replacement of the *Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz* had been initiated and planned well before unification.

[26] In the new *Länder* the *KJHG* came into force with unification at the 3rd October 1990, including some interim regulation and in the old *Länder at* 1st January 1991.

Chapter 4: Women's routes into family day care

> A way of bringing in an income and looking after own child at home (childminder, questionnaire)
>
> I wanted to continue working in my occupation. That was not possible in the day centre. Therefore I tried family day care. Works out super. (*Tagesmutter*, questionnaire)

When asking childminders and *Tagesmütter* why they chose to do this kind of work three themes were repeated over and over again: their childcare responsibilities, the need for money and the nature of the work with children itself. Each of the themes covers a range of motivations, and it was the particular combination of at least two of these three themes that led individual women into this kind of self-employment.

Research in the 1970s found women choosing to look after other people's children in their home to be characterised either by domesticity and rootedness (Bryant et al. 1980), or by home-centeredness including a fondness of children (Bruner 1980). More alarmingly childminders hoped to escape boredom, loneliness and/or depression (Mayall and Petrie 1977), or to 'quench their emotional hunger' (Jackson and Jackson 1979) by taking care of children. All of these are individualistic explanations. They appear to fit into an explanatory framework that views individual tastes and preferences as more influential in women's work strategies than the structural context. In this framework men and women are seen to make abstract rational choices, for example to invest in their human capital, which then can be taken to the market.

Before we look at the process that results in women registering as family day care providers, the question of how women find out about this form of work and of what they perceive to be the advantages of caring for other people's children in their homes will be investigated. The differing processes that lead to becoming a childminder or *Tagesmutter* will then be explored in terms of the following: qualification level, past engagement in the labour market, and whether there are similarities and differences in their situations immediately before they become family day care providers. Opening the home to other people involves all household members. Therefore the role husbands or partners played

and how children were involved in the decision to offer family day care will also be addressed.

Knowing a family day care provider

Most women in the British sample had personal acquaintance with at least one other childminder prior to becoming engaged in this field of work. Of 185 childminders answering the question if they had known a childminder before they registered, 71.2 per cent (146) did. Of the remaining 19 per cent, the questionnaire reveals, many had heard about childminding from social services or health care workers, while others were approached by mothers who were both looking for childcare and who knew about the need for childminders to register with the local authority. Additionally, typical mothers' networks carry information about childminding – mothers meeting at the school gates, or in parent-and-toddler groups, or female family members.

In contrast, the research revealed that the majority of the German sample (eleven of 20) had not met a *Tagesmutter* prior to engaging in this line of work. This is not altogether surprising, as is revealed by the fact that while two women in the sample had worked as a *Tagesmutter* before unification and before there was recognition and financial subsidy by the *Jugendamt*, they did not call themselves '*Tagesmutter*'. One stated that she had not heard of *Tagesmütter* but knew of the

> need to look after children suffering ill health and also from my own experience with our daughter (Asthma). (Questionnaire, Karin, worked 20 years)

The other one had contact with a cousin living in West Germany who worked as a *Tagesmutter*. For all those who became *Tagesmütter* after unification and after the introduction of subsidy the information was available from several sources: the *Jugendamt* looking for *Tagesmütter*, the local paper and regional television programme who reported about this form of childcare and parents.

Perceived advantages of working as a childminder

Knowing a family day care provider and/or having information about this kind of work are, on their own, not a reason for working as a childminder or a *Tagesmutter*. The English and the German questionnaires asked respondents to note down in a few words their reasons for becoming a family day care provider. Although this was an open question the uniformity of the answers invited coding the statements of the 177 childminders (28 did not answer this question) and the 20 *Tagesmütter* (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Reasons for becoming a childminder or *Tagesmutter* *

	Childminders		Tagesmütter	
	N	%	N	%
To be able to look after own children	131	74	10	50
Liking children	66	37	7	35
Earning money	64	36	6	30
Enjoying working with children	58	33	8	40
Wanting to work in their occupation	0		7	35

*More than one answer was possible

The most important reason identified by both *Tagesmütter* and childminders for working as a family day care provider was the opportunity to provide care for their own children at the same time. Table 4.2 lists the combination of reasons for taking up family day care. 'Nature of work' refers to being fond of children in general, and to liking working with children. Being able to look after one's own children features in the two largest groups of combinations. Twenty seven per cent of childminders gave both the nature of the work of a childminder *and* their wish to be able to look after their own children as reasons for taking this career. Twenty-three per cent of registered childminders aimed to combine the care of their own children with the opportunity to earn money.

Table 4.2: Combination of reasons for taking up childminding

	Childminders N	%
Nature of work and looking after own children	45	25
Looking after own children and earning money	39	22
Nature of work	31	18
Looking after own children	26	15
Nature of work, looking after own children and earning money	21	12
Nature of work and earning money	3	2
Earning money	1	
Other reason(s)	11	6
Total	177	100

The difference between the English and the German sample is based on the larger proportion of women in the German sample who had no children of their own (15 %)[1]. Women with children had, at least in principle, better access to childcare facilities, as we have seen in Chapter 3. The emphasis German *Tagesmütter* put on the desire to work in their occupation *Erzieherin* (Table 4.1) is worthy of comment. In contrast, none of the English respondents made such clear statements. However, given that 'enjoying working with children' is almost certainly part of the motivation for working in a childcare occupation, these different motivations may overlap. Additionally, the different levels of childcare training have to be taken into account in making this comparison. Only 11 per cent (19) survey respondents in England held a Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB) compared to 35 per cent of the *Tagesmütter* who are either *Kinderpflegerinnen* or *Erzieherinnen*, the German equivalent to an NNEB and the next higher occupation[2].

Such an exploration of why women became family day care providers however, disregards the complexities of individual stories and the process that results in women taking up this kind of self-employment. Which is what I now go on to consider.

A focus on the processes undergone in making the transition to becoming a family day care provider indicates that some women were led down this line of business by coincidence and circumstance in contrast to others who became childminders or *Tagesmütter* after careful consideration and planning. It was with a view to establishing these different paths into family day care that the interviews were examined. It is striking

that the majority of the English interviewees seem to have slipped into childminding compared to the *Tagesmütter*, who appeared to have made a more positive decision to look after children in their homes as a response to their own economic situation.

The following section will take a chronological approach. The questionnaires and interviews show that becoming a family day care provider took place in two distinctive steps: first these women had left or had lost employment and then they became childminders or *Tagesmütter*. However, given that before one can leave the labour market one must have entered it we shall begin by exploring education – the point where the course of opportunities in the labour markets is set.

Starting in the labour market

In Chapter 3 we saw that women's employment opportunities depend on their education and qualification, on the number of children they have and on the availability of childcare, and on the economic situation of the country or the region. A comparison of the data in Table 4.3 with data from the United Kingdom in spring 1997 shows that a higher proportion of active childminders had no qualifications (UK 15.2 per cent in the age group 30-39) and a considerably smaller proportion of childminders hold a higher education qualification (UK 23.3 per cent) (Middlemas and Sly 1998). The returned questionnaires in England showed that two thirds of women active as childminders had either no qualification or had achieved O-levels or GCSE (Table 4.3). These are the women who are more likely to be economically inactive or unemployed (Middlemas and Sly 1998).

Table 4.3: Highest qualification of childminders

	Childminders N	%
None	31	19
O-levels, GCSE	76	47
A-levels, BTec	13	8
Prof. Training	15	9
Hon. Degree	4	3
Missing data	24	15
All	153	100

The system of education, qualification and occupational training set up in each of the two countries differs considerably. A straightforward comparison of education and training opportunities for women (and men) in Britain and Germany is not possible. German and British qualifications correspond only approximately, as set out in Table 4.4. An attempt by the European Commission to compare educational achievement across Europe chose the completion rate of at least upper secondary education. For women between the age of 35 and 39 the completion rate was 50.3 per cent for women in the United Kingdom and 81.8 per cent for women in the unified Germany (European Commission 2000).

Table 4.4: Highest qualification of *Tagesmütter*

	Tagesmütter N	%
Hauptschule (the lowest educational qualification)	1	5
Fachschule, *Fachhochschule* (corresponding to different NVQ levels)[3]	9	45
University	3	15
Apprenticeship	7	35
All	20	100

A comparison of the educational and occupational qualifications of the *Tagesmütter* in the sample with data of women living 1999 in the new *Länder* also shows differences. The proportion of *Tagesmütter* who had a qualification gained at a *Fachschule* or *Fachhochschule* was at 45 per cent larger than the 16 per cent of women who were between 35 and 40 years in 1999 in the new *Länder*. On average women between 35 and 40 years were more likely to have completed an apprenticeship and less likely to have gained an university qualification than the sample of *Tagesmütter* in Rostock (Statistisches Bundesamt 2000, my calculation). *Tagesmütter* are not only better educated than childminders, they are more or less as well educated as the (East) German female population generally.

There was also a marked difference in childcare qualifications achieved before they became family day care providers. Over half of the *Tagesmütter* had undertaken training or higher education with the aim to work with children at the start of their working lives (Table 4.5)[4]. That compares with just 14 per cent of childminders who had either

achieved a Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB) or had become teachers or Children's Nurses (Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Childcare related qualification of *Tagesmütter*

Qualification	*Tagesmütter* N	%
None	8	42 %
Krippenerzieherin / Kinderpflegerin (NNEB)	4	16 %
Kindergartenerzieherin / Erzieherin	3	21 %
Other*	4	21 %
Missing data**	1	
Total	20	100 %

* University qualifications, such as special need teacher or speech therapist.

** This Tagesmutter had a childcare or education related university qualification, which she did not specify any further.

Table 4.6: Childcare related training or qualifications of active childminders

Qualification	Childminders N	%
None	102	63
NNEB	19	12
Crèche worker certificate	9	6
Play group leader	3	2
Open university	2	1
Other*	17	10
Missing data	12	7
All	163	100

* Of those two were teachers and two Sick Children's Nurses

All of the German interviewees with childcare qualifications had worked in day centres, residential homes or children's sanatoriums after completion of their training. According to the questionnaires and interviews in England the entrance into the labour force for the women with NNEB training was by working as a nanny. Other childcare related

qualifications were not necessarily gained before entering the labour market or before working as a childminder.

All of the interviewed women with childcare training in England and Germany described their choice of occupation as 'something they always wanted to do'. This is not to say that the other women in the sample did not also have career goals, but that these may have been hampered by other circumstances. For example, Margaret had wanted to become a nurse. Her mother did not allow her to live in the nurses' home – a precondition to do the training. Consequently Margaret had worked in an office, a job she 'found' with the help of one of her mother's friends. One of the *Tagesmütter* had had a dream of working with tigers. She could not fulfil this aim because she found out too late that she would have to attend a special school in Berlin.

The interviews of the British childminders, in particular, showed women's commitment to earning money as soon they leave school. The women who were in their late forties or early fifties stated the ease with which they found employment when they left school, and drifted in an out of different jobs. For example Ivy (aged 51 at the interview):

> Oh, when I left school there were stacks of jobs. I worked in shops and I went to night schools. And then I was 17, I got set on by the Coal Board. (Ivy, worked 18 years as a childminder)

In some of the interviews a lack of direction emerged. Women did not know what they wanted to be when they left school. Alison (33 years) described her path into employment as showing her mother that she could find a job. Ruth (27 years) and Louise (31 years) started a Youth Employment Scheme, which they did not finish because the same employer employed them full-time. Evelyn (39 years) is a childminder who tried many different jobs. She worked in a hotel, she nursed the elderly and she worked for the police force.

With hindsight women felt a lack appropriate guidance. Neither their teachers nor their parents appeared to be aware of their potential or were able to act on it.

> I was top of the class ... a couple of times. And the very last year, when I was there, you took the Northern Counties [exam] and then you stayed on for a fifth year and you did your GCE's.... I didn't stay on at school, because I had the offer of an office job,

> which was quite well paid. My parents, ... they saw that as being a wonderful achievement to work in an office, wonderful achievement. Because she had worked in a factory all her life and he being a pitman. And so for me to get the job in an office was like wonderful. ... I now realise that I was probably capable of doing a degree or something. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

The *Tagesmütter* did not seem to have a similar experience of drifting in an out of different jobs after leaving school. The interviews paint a picture of an orderly process from discussing which occupation was suitable, what training was available and a transfer from (compulsory) school to apprenticeship or to further or higher education. This reflects the planned economy of the former GDR, which included plans for training and educating people[5].

Out of the labour market

The surveys in England and in Germany asked about the labour market position of women before they registered as family day care providers. Most of the German respondents had been unemployed (Table 4.7). Six of the unemployed had been trained childcare workers, subsequently losing their employment in one of Rostock's day centres due to the cutback of childcare places. Others were unemployed despite retraining. For example, two cooks had retrained as a secretary and in business management respectively, and a poultry-breeder had retrained as Clerk in Transport Trade.

Table 4.7: Before registering as a *Tagesmutter*

	Tagesmütter N	%
Unemployed	12	60
Economically inactive or student	4	20
Handed in notice (before unification)	2	10
Child-Raising Leave	2	10

The German women showed a great work commitment in relation to the national economic activity rate. In this respect they are different from the *Tagesmütter* recruited

for the 1970s pilot scheme '*Tagesmütter*' in West Germany. These were not in employment, looking after the home and their children before they became the *Tagesmütter* of the pilot scheme (Blüml et al. 1977).

Unfortunately, the answers of the English respondents are ambiguous. Answers to other questions and interviews revealed that some women responded as if they were asked whether they ever had been employed before becoming a childminder. Others understood the question, as hoped, as inquiring about their activities immediately before registering as a childminder. One-hundred-and-seventy-eight childminders forwarded information about their employment status before registration. Of those 69 (38 per cent) had been employed or self-employed and a further 13 (7 per cent) described themselves as unemployed. The remaining 96 childminders (54 per cent) stated they were looking after the home.

That none of the German respondents had been active in employment in contrast to the 38 per cent of English respondents is a strong reminder of the difficult labour market situation women face in the new *Länder*. It is not surprising that the difference between these two samples concerning unemployment is equally striking with only 7 per cent of the childminders compared to 60 per cent of the *Tagesmütter*. However, the low proportion of childminders taking the label 'unemployed' may be misleading. Martin and Roberts (1984) suggest a continuum between unemployed and permanently economically inactive for women, rather than existing definitions of unemployment. Women in general appear to be less likely than men to think of themselves as unemployed. In particular, women who are not registered as unemployed because they do not qualify for benefit, are less likely to describe themselves as unemployed, and are more likely to describe themselves as housewives (Gallie and Vogler 1994). Twomey (2001) describes similar ambiguities. She reports the difficulties in interpreting women's statements about their intentions of finding work. The answer is influenced by whether anticipated difficulties of arranging childcare are considered or are ignored (Twomey 2001).

In contrast to the German women who were to become family day care providers, the impact of children on English mothers' labour market activity is traceable and in accordance with the economic activity rates of mothers of young children in Britain (Thair and Risdon 1999) – despite the ambiguous data yielded from the questionnaires. That the number and the age of children have a significant influence on mothers' labour market participation – at least in Britain and in the former West Germany has been well

established (see Chapter 3) and is reflected in the labour market activities of childminders prior to providing family day care. Of the 114 English respondents who had at least one child under five, 45 (40 per cent) had been part of the labour force compared to 69 (61 per cent) who looked after the home. Of the 57 women with children five or older the proportion was reversed. Of these women 34 (60 per cent) were economically active compared to 23 (40 per cent) staying at home ($p < 0.01$).

The English survey also confirmed that the number of children has a significant impact on the economic activity rate of mothers. Women who had one or two children were more likely to have had undertaken paid work outside the home before becoming a childminder than women who had more than two children. Only 33 per cent of women with three or more children had had other jobs, leaving 67 per cent looking after the home and children ($p < 0.05$). Of the 23 women with only one child at the time of registration 70 per cent (16) were economically active in contrast to the 151 women with more than one child where only 42 per cent (64) undertook paid work outside the home ($p < 0.05$).

The returned questionnaires and interviews of *Tagesmütter* did not show such a clear correlation between labour market participation and children. The connection between having children and mothers' labour market participation rate does not tell us a lot about the structures of constraint and the processes that pull mothers out of employment. The next section explores the ways motherhood results in leaving the labour market.

The impact of children on women leaving the labour market

The processes that push or pull mothers out of the labour market are not easily to grasp since they are to be found between individual preferences and structural constraints. A look at it may highlight the interplay between attitudes towards the combination of paid and unpaid work, the perception of what children need from their mothers and structural constraints arising out of the level of childcare provision. An examination of the process of mothers' departures from paid employment also has to include husbands or partners.

It was clear that women were receptive to their husband preferences. Of 152 childminders who responded to the statement 'my partner prefers me to stay at home' 52 (34 per cent) agreed, 68 (45 per cent) disagreed and 32 (21 per cent) did not know. Of the childminders where the labour market position before registration is known, the husband's preference can be connected to the childminder's labour market activity: of the 51 who believed that

their husband preferred them staying at home only 16 (31 per cent) were active in the labour force before becoming a childminder compared to 39 (60 per cent) of the 65 women who disagreed with this statement ($p < 0.01$).

The interviews and some of the questionnaires showed that women held different ideals of their role as a mother. Most of the interviewed childminders, seven out of ten, did not feel that motherhood could or should be combined with paid employment, at least for a certain period. All of the interviewed *Tagesmütter* had envisaged themselves as mothers in paid work. The difference between German and British women is the better protection of parents in the labour market in Germany. British mothers fairly quickly have to decide whether to return to work after the birth of their child. This may lead to a perception by British mothers that they have no choice but to leave the job they had before or leave the labour market all together. German women can make use of extensive Child-Raising Leave (up to the third birthday of the child). Two of the *Tagesmütter* were on Child-Raising Leave. One of these women was adamant that she wanted to return to work as a teacher. Two patterns are apparent from the data: family day care providers who see themselves primarily as mothers or primarily as workers.

Primarily mother

Research on childminding in the 1970s portrayed childminders as characterised by domesticity (Bryant et al. 1980). The interviews of childminders showed that there are mothers who clearly stated that they see their role as staying at home with their children during the first few years of their lives.

> I had a full-time job. And I didn't have her until I was 34, so it was quite late. ... so I left work when I was six month pregnant to have her. And because, I had always wanted a child and never thought I would have one. ... I got like a miracle baby. And I mean, because I just thought I was never going to have children. ... Then I knew I didn't want to go back to work. I wanted to spend, you know, the first four, five years at home with her, before she went off to school, to enjoy it, you know? (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

Partners or husbands often support this stance. Ruth and Peter have the idea that one of the parents ought to be at home to 'mother' the children. Since Peter has a career in

higher education and is able to earn more money in contrast to Ruth, it is Ruth who stays at home. Here is Ivy's description how the final decision was made that propelled her out of paid employment.

> I worked there right until I left to have Thomas. ... And I was asked to go back part-time. It was part-time, but it was a full working week. But it was only while someone was ill to cover. And Fred [husband] said: 'You are not. You are not going back. You are having the bairn and that's it.' And so, no, I didn't bother. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

These arrangements are supported by a perceived need for the instant availability of parents. The interviews of childminders and *Tagesmütter* showed clearly that childcare commitments do not cease to be pressing from, for example, the age of five. Older children may not need to be supervised in the sense of being fed or kept safe. Yet their mothers perceived their need for somebody to talk to as very strong. For Liz this was the reason to leave her full-time employment when her older child started secondary school. Before she was able to take her children with her to work. Ivy is proud of having been a good mother to her son. Thomas was 22 at the time of the interview and had just left home to study at university.

> Our Thomas likes to come home to his mum. He used to like to come home and me being here. And he has never ever come home and I'm not being here. Never, ever. And he's never ever, apart from once, been left with anybody when he was little. (Ivy, worked 18 years as a childminder)

So mothers felt a responsibility towards their children to enable them to be successful in their lives which can even stretch until children are able to leave home. Some women who ended up leaving their employment, like Karen in Germany due to her daughter's ill-health or Laura and Margaret in England due to their own health problems, found in hindsight advantages of being available at home to their children

> I hope by being at home, that I've been able to give them sort of more stability to go out and get a better education to be able to –

> I've been lucky; I've got both daughters being at university. (Margaret, worked 6 years as a childminder)

How they perceive the experience of their teenage children of having a mother at home is then connected to their own situation when they were children or teenagers.

> When I did go to the senior school, and I got a key, and had to come into an empty house, I hated it. I really hated it. I didn't like being an only child. And I didn't like coming into an empty house. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Also, women who had not anticipated staying at home but lost their employment learned to appreciate the time spent with their children. Ursula intended to return to her employment after two years maternity leave and Child-Raising Leave. She already had organised a *Tagesmutter* for her daughter, but then the job disappeared.

> Then I said, I am not going to do that at all anymore. Then I asked myself why I don't do that [providing family day care] by myself, because, uhm, I used for my first child a daycentre and I did not see a lot of him – always only in the evening. And with my daughter I already had been at home two years and there I realised how nice it is. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

This group of women resembles some the features of childminders back in the 1970s. Bryant, Harris and Newton (1980) described their sample as characterised by domesticity. Yet some women in my research considered that becoming a mother is not compatible with the career they had started before having children.

> I worked in the office for 6 month on YTS [Youth Training Scheme]. And then I went to Littlewoods on an YTS. And I worked my way up at Littlewoods. So basically I gave my career up to have my family. That was my chance. I'm old fashioned. I believe that when you have children under school-age, that they need a mum at home. (Louise (31), worked as a childminder 3 years)

Louise's wish to be a mum at home cut short her chance of a career at Littlewoods. However, the income situation of her family made it necessary to earn some money,

particularly with a rising number of children. Louise left paid employment for some time after her first child was born to return part-time during the day. After the birth of her second child she worked three nights a week and then, after having another child and taking up childminding, turned to work at weekends in addition to providing family day care.

Primarily worker

Unlike earlier British research most German and some English women envisaged a combination of motherhood with paid employment. Mothers who had a clear commitment to work were generally pushed out of the labour market due to the break down of childcare arrangements. This often happened piecemeal. Due to the different levels and forms of childcare provision in England and the new *Länder* in Germany the unexpected breakdown of (anticipated) childcare arrangements has distinct appearances.

Women in the former GDR were pushed out of employment by the ill-health of children that rendered them incapable of attending day centres, in combination with a lack of informal childcare. Of the ten interviewed *Tagesmütter* three had children who were born with a heart condition or suffered asthma. These women tried different strategies from taking the child to work, to attempting to fit working hours around children's waking hours. At the time late shifts were available in bars and restaurants or hotels. However it did not turn out to be an ideal solution.

> After my son [was born] I worked as bar staff. And [I] worked only nights or late evenings. But, as I said, during the day I was tired and completely exhausted. Therefore I couldn't do a lot with the child. I would have liked to sleep all day. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

In England the breakdown happened at the level of arrangement between parent and childcare provider. Either the place was not available any more or parents were dissatisfied and ended the childcare arrangement.

> I did plan to go back to work. There was no problem. But I was using a family member to look after my son. And at the last minute she couldn't have him. So I sort of fumbled around for a while and did a couple of evening jobs to fit in. And then thought,

> so why not? This would be ideal. I love children. Why not try to become registered and then I can have somebody else's child with my own. (Alison, childminder worked 8 years)

Some of the English and German women managed to cling on to some employment with the help of informal care provided by their own parents and their partner. They tried to arrange their working hours around their husband's working times. However, when men were expected to work longer hours on short notice they could not offer reliable cover as in Alison's case. She felt rather embarrassed to ring her workplace to announce that she would be late. Also, husbands who are working away frequently or who are working extremely long hours were not able to provide care for their children allowing the women to go out to work.

> The childminder I had previously let me down, my son was then looked after for a short time by his nanna [grandmother of the child] as all my trust had gone. I left work after handing in my notice. (Childminder, questionnaire)

The respondent was not able to find a satisfactory solution to her childcare needs, resulting in her leaving employment. Women using their parents to look after their children may be confronted with their parents declining health. Laura had to change her arrangements when her mother became too frail to look after her two young children.

Also women who would like to engage in paid employment but cannot fall back on informal, unpaid childcare may come to the conclusion that to do so would not be feasible.

> I was unable to find a job that fitted in with school holidays and if I had to pay a childminder myself it would not be worth my while. (Childminder, questionnaire)

Again, this is connected to the earning capacities of women based on their education and qualification and the discrimination against women in the labour market. The rationality of setting childcare costs against women's income works particularly well when the ideal of the 'male breadwinner' family is adhered to. In such instances, women's employment becomes a luxury. If she wants to work, she has to carry the (childcare) costs.

The German interviews revealed another variation of household decision that resulted in the wife's loss of employment. Three families had moved to Rostock either because the employer of the husband had sent him there or it appeared to be a positive career move for the husband. The lack of opportunities to find formal employment for the 'trailing' wives (Bruegel 1996), particularly when trained in childcare, drove them to become *Tagesmütter*.

Slipping into family day care

None of the interviewed childminders or *Tagesmütter* had chosen family day care as a career as one might choose an occupation with the intention to build a career over many years. Instead family day care was taken on when work and care arrangements had been thrown off balance, or when it was perceived as an opportunity to add income generation to the role of mother and housewife. Most of the family day care providers had 'slipped' into this kind of self-employment. As we saw above, sometimes that happened short-term, unexpectedly and for various reasons. These women tried hard to find new jobs that would fit around their childcare commitments, tried to replace faltered childcare arrangements or spent their day caring for their family and working at night. What they could not or would not do was to give up earning an income. The interviews of the German women also showed that it is important for these women to work. They became childminders or *Tagesmütter* when they ran out of ideas or felt that they could not cope with the struggle of employment outside the home any longer.

The idea of becoming a family day care provider was either a possibility known to women or was triggered by other family day care providers or parents looking for childcare. Of the interviewed family day care providers 10 women described their path into family day care as a solution they had worked out for themselves (4 English, 6 German), for 5 women the suggestion came from another family day care provider (4 English, 1 German) and 5 were approached by parents looking for childcare (2 English, 3 German).

Astrid is one of the German *Tagesmütter* who had been working as *Erzieherin* before but lost employment after unification. She was looking for paid employment she could

combine with her family. Informal care was not readily available. Her husband was working shifts and parents and parents in law were employed, too.

> First I got some information from a magazine. ... Then I went to the *Jugendamt*, to get information how it works with *Tagesmütter*, whether there is some support. Then I wrote to the *Landesjugendamt* to find out whether there is financial support. I explained my intentions. That I would like to have a separate room and a cloakroom, and if there is any financial support available. (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

Similarly English women who believe that childminding is a solution turn to Social Services to find out the particulars.

> Because my husband was working full-time, so it means paying somebody to watch mine. So, and then I thought, well, I like children, I always liked children. Then I thought well, I'll go into childminding. So I phoned up Civic Centre and inquired about it. And then it went from there, to be a childminder. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

Some women were approached by mothers looking for childcare or by somebody who tried to help someone to find childcare. Most of the time these women described their work and income situation in less problematic terms than the women where work and childcare solutions had been thrown off balance.

> I got a little job cleaning. And I cleaned for this friend of mine, and she became a friend, for a year. When her husband left her, a little boy, two and a baby, six month. So she was pretty desperate. And she said, 'Ivy, instead of doing my cleaning, will you look after the children?' So I said, 'Eeh, why, yes, of course I will.' And that was how I started to childmind. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

Deborah gave birth to three children at two-year intervals. Deborah started to work as a childminder when her first child started school. Taking on her friend's children when the

latter returned to work as a supply teacher felt more like a "sort of a continuation" of her role as mother of young children.

Almut had been given notice as part of mass-redundancies in Rostock's day centres when she was approached by a mother whose child attended Almut's group and who also had a younger child.

> She said, 'Come on Frau Reimann, it would be so favourable. I would take my child to your home.' That's how it started. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Almut's subsequent reaction was that of careful consideration and planning. She went home and discussed with her family whether working as a *Tagesmutter* would be a feasible solution to her pending unemployment. She also had been at the job-centre, where she was told that her chances of finding employment were very slim and that there might be the possibility to re-train. Almut did not wish to retrain, because she loved her occupation.

Two of the other *Tagesmütter* had also been asked if they were interested in looking after other people's children. One of these women was approached by two of her neighbours and friends. That happened at a time where she was increasingly unhappy about her arrangements concerning her son when she had to leave early in the morning for work. The other German woman had just coped with moving, the birth of her second child and a husband working extremely long hours. The opportunity to work a few hours as a *Tagesmutter* gave her some confirmation of the worth of her work at home and provided her with some income.

For other women the initiative came from a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* who suggested that they try this kind of work. The suggestion appeared reasonable and there was nothing to lose. After all, as Evelyn said, the course was free or, as in Laura's case, at the time convincing the officer at social services that one had experience with children was sufficient. One of the German women became a *Tagesmutter* following the suggestion of her friend, Karin (working 20 years as a *Tagesmutter*) and with her support. Some of these women started the process of registration without being completely committed to the work as a childminder. They were still open to other ways of earning money and appeared not to go out looking for parents in need for childcare. Instead, they were found by the parents.

> I had a six-month break [from work as dental nurse due to health reasons] and a friend was actually childminding. So she was bringing her minded children over to me, to see me on the odd day and suggested, why didn't I register as a childminder, while I was looking for a part-time job. And I said, well I would. 'Cause at the time it took about six month to register. And I thought, well if I found another job in the mean time, that I would take it. But I'm going through the procedure to register in the mean time. And I just more or less finished the registration. And I used to do Brownies as well. And one of the Brownie leaders said, 'Oh, I didn't realise you're registering. I've had somebody inquiring if you could take two children. So would you be interested?' And I said, 'Yes.' So, I've had more or less two children lined up for when my registration came through. And I've been doing it ever since (laughs). (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Sometimes this response was triggered by an acquaintance or a personal request. Angela met a childminder at a parent-and-toddler group who declared:

> 'You know, you would be a really good childminder.' So I was quite a bit surprised, you know. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

Angela felt flattered by this remark. She repeatedly visited her childminding friend in order to find out whether this kind of work would suit her. When she felt that she would like to become a childminder, too, she turned to Social Services to go ahead with registration.

The next best thing

Taking up family day care is a 'next best thing' solution. It can be the next best thing from the perspective of a woman and her family who sees her primarily role as that of a mother.

> So, we both sort of liked the idea of having a mum at home for a child. But financially we were in a situation where that wasn't possible. Like, I think, most people are. So we both, we're really,

> as I said, like-minded, we wanted a mum at home – and this was a way of doing both things. Okay, you can't completely give your attention hundred per cent to your child, when you have a first child to look after to give care and support. But it was the next best thing. (Peter, jointly registered with Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

However, family day care was also initially the 'next best thing' for trained childcare workers in Germany. They had lost work they loved, but felt that they had a lot to offer to children and parents. To work as a *Tagesmutter* appeared to be the next best replacement of the employment they had lost as long as they took care that the conditions were right. One example is Monika.

> In 1995 we moved from Bavaria up here. Down in Bavaria I worked as *Erzieherin*. Up here it was really bad finding work as *Erzieherin*. Therefore I stayed at home for a longer period. I read a newspaper article about *Tagesmütter*. ... Well, and then I thought I am going to do this [family day care] as alternative to my occupation. Why should I sit at home all the time, and not being able to find work. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews shows that some of the alarming findings of research into childminding in the 1970s were not repeated. A study in Oxfordshire found that nearly a quarter of the sample had started to work as a childminder in order to overcome boredom, loneliness and/or depression or because they were too ill to go out to work (Mayall and Petrie 1977). Jackson and Jackson (1979) believed that a 'passive' policy of registering childminders who are thrown up by the market results in a distinct type of childminder to be found amongst other types of childminders. These childminders retreat from the public world because they find it difficult to cope with public work, may be illiterate or suffer ill health, are too frightened to go out and feel more secure in their homes. They may quench their emotional hunger by looking after other people's children (Jackson and Jackson 1979). This was not the case either for English or German family day care providers at the end of the 1990s.

Support from husbands

We have looked at negative views towards employment from the husband's perspective as reported by family day care providers. Now we are going to look at the role husbands played when women plan to become childminders or *Tagesmütter*. All the interviewed women were very clear that their partner's approval of their work as a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* was essential[6]. This is particularly the case when the husband or partner is spending much time at home, for example due to unemployment.

> Of course he had to agree. It is a kind of precondition. I could not decide on my own. He has to live with the children, too. The daily routine changes completely. (Birgit, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Their partners' involvement in the decision to become a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* ranged from active support to passive acceptance. Almut's husband was involved in the planning and consequently invested time, energy and money in extending the house, and was so improving Almut's working conditions. Peter's involvement as Ruth's (emergency) assistant started with the inquiry by phone into childminding. Eagerly he picked up the suggestion to register as well.

The enthusiasm shown by these two men is based on the one hand on their attitudes concerning the organisation of childcare within families and their attitude concerning their wives' working lives, and on the other hand on the role they imagine for themselves as husband of a childminder or *Tagesmutter*. For Peter childminding appears to be the best compromise how to 'have a mum at home' and at the same time to increase the family income. However, he also clearly enjoys discussing what day care can offer to children and parents and the best way to organise it[7]. Almut's husband was relieved that there was a way that allowed his wife to work in the occupation she cherished. Another aspect of his involvement is the apparent pride he takes being able to design and build spaces suitable for children. These activities have nothing in common with his self-employment.

The accounts of childminders and *Tagesmütter* showed that their husbands' reactions to their plan to become a family day care provider were also based on their husbands' position in the labour market, their working hours and the consequences for the family arising out of this.

> We talked about it and decided quite quickly. That is something for me. I am at home for my own children and at the same time I am at work somehow ... He [Anke's husband] also had the opinion that I have to earn money. (Anke, worked as *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

Monika's husband was not enthusiastic about opening their home to other people and their children. However, in the context of their moves to the South and back to the Northeast of Germany, and the resulting unemployment of Monika (despite her repetition of childcare training in Bavaria) he felt it was appropriate to accept day care as a compromise.

> In the end it was rather negative for me. My whole world collapsed: housewife, no work, nothing. And he remarked, 'For you this is an alternative, somehow.' Well, you've got the children in the house, but somehow you have to deal with this situation. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Similarly, Astrid's husband felt that other people's children might be rather disruptive. He works 24-hour shifts and therefore day care and his working hours do not coincide and he feared that he would find it difficult to sleep undisturbed. On the other hand, none of their parents could look after their children to allow Astrid to go out to work since they are working, too.

According to the family day care providers' accounts, some of the men felt that it was not really their position to decide. It appears that as long as the arrangements within the household were not altered, they had no good reason opposing their wives' plans.

> He just said, 'Go for it.' If that is what I'd fancied doing, you know. And he didn't mind. He wanted me to be here to look after my daughter, you know. He didn't want me to go out to work or anything. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

> Naturally he left me to decide entirely and did not put me under pressure, 'Yes, do it, then we've got DM 400 [£143] more.' He rather asked, 'Do you think that it won't be too much?' Because he knew that as well: our last summer had been very hard. That

> was when he started to work here and it was much more strenuous than we had anticipated. ... I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

Any reluctance on the partner's side was either pre-empted or countered with reassurance that hardly anything would change.

> Oh basically he just said, if that is what I wanted, fine. Because ... the children would be gone when he comes in from work. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

> He was absolutely fine with it as long as it was a case: yes, that's fine, but don't expect me to do anything extra. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Christiane's husband needed reassurance that children would neither enter his study nor touch his computer and that he would maintain a place to retreat.

When the children to be looked after were related to the woman or were the children of friends or acquaintances it was presumably more difficult for husbands to oppose. Laura claimed that her husband Brian had no say in whether she should start to work as a childminder. Brian confirmed this account. His involvement was "just as a taxi driver"[8]. Ivy and Deborah slipped into childminding after being asked to look after particular children living in their neighbourhood. Both women saw their role as staying at home with their children and then started this new work in order to help a friend.

> I think he was not really bothered, one way or the other. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18years)

Deborah claims her partner was prepared to accept her self-employment as a childminder because she was happy to engage in this kind of work. So although it was essential for childminders and *Tagesmütter* to gain their husbands' approval, this could often take a rather passive form.

Their children

At the time the women were beginning to work as family day care providers 17 German respondents were mothers. One *Tagesmutter* gave birth to her youngest child after she had taken up this form of self-employment. Three women had no children. Of the 182

childminders where the information about the age of their children is available 179 were mothers before they became childminders. Two women had no children and one childminder became a mother after registration as a childminder. The age of the children ranged from a few months to 35 years. There is a marked difference between childminders and *Tagesmütter* in this respect. In general, childminders started their work as family day care providers when their children were younger. Thirty-two per cent (57) of childminders' oldest or only child were of pre-school age and 45 per cent (80) were of primary school age, 17 per cent (31) were of secondary school age and only 6 per cent (11) were adults (Figure 4.1). That compares to *Tagesmütter* with children up to 4 years at 12 per cent (2), 40 per cent (7) with children between 5 and 10 years, 24 per cent (4) with children at secondary school age and another 24 per cent (4) of adult children (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1: Age of childminders' oldest or only child at start-up of family day care provision

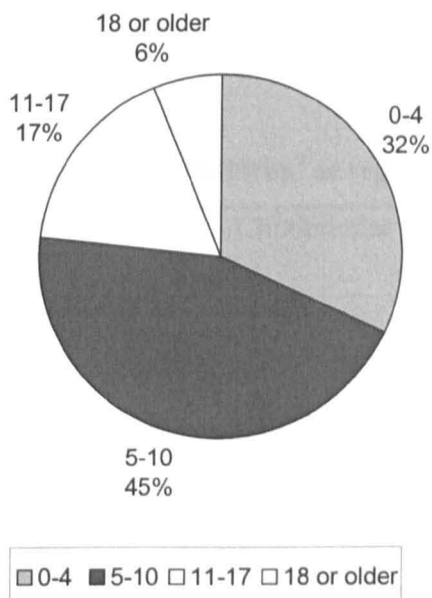
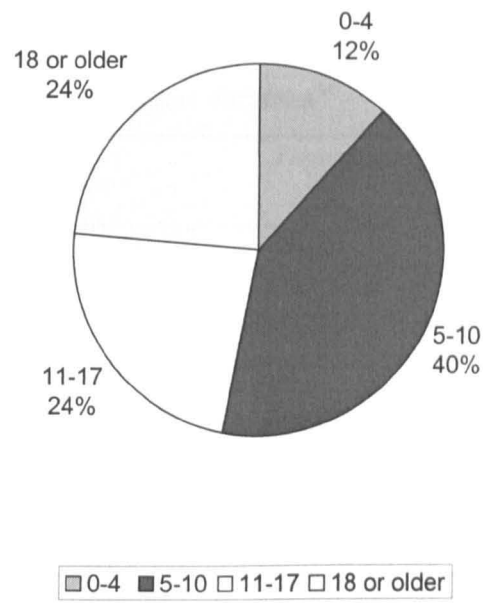


Figure 4.2: Age of *Tagesmütter*'s oldest or only child at start-up of family day care provision



A further analysis of the questionnaires shows that the largest group of childminders (32 per cent) had one child or more children under the age of five (Table 4.8). This group was followed closely at 26 per cent of childminders who had a child of pre-school age and a child of primary school age.

Table 4.8: Age of the childminders' children[9] at registration

	Childminder with oldest child in age-group* N (%)				
Number of childminder with youngest child in age group	0-4	5-10	11-17	18+	All
Not born	20 (11 %)	6 (3 %)	1		27 (15 %)
0-4	37 (21 %)	47 (26 %)	7 (4 %)	1	92 (51 %)
5-10		27 (15 %)	16 (9 %)	2 (1 %)	45 (25 %)
11-17			7 (4 %)	5 (3 %)	12 (7 %)
18+				3 (2 %)	3 (2 %)
All	57 (32 %)	80 (45 %)	31 (17 %)	11 (6 %)	179 (100 %)

* Three childminders were not mothers at the point of registration. Twenty-three childminders did not note down the age of their children.

In Germany there were two large groups. Twenty-four per cent of *Tagesmütter* had children of kindergarten and primary school age. The same proportion of *Tagesmütter* had only grown up children (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Age of the *Tagesmütter*' children[10]

	Tagesmutter with oldest child in age-group* N (%)				
Number of *Tagesmutter* with youngest child in age group	0-4	5-10	11-17	18+	All
Not born	1 (6 %)				1 (6 %)
0-4	1 (6 %)	3 (18 %)	2 (12 %)		6 (35 %)
5-10		4 (24 %)	1 (6 %)		5 (29 %)
11-17			1 (6 %)		1 (6%)
18+				4 (24 %)	4 (24 %)
All	2 (12 %)	7 (41 %)	4 (24 %)	4 (24 %)	17 (100 %)

* Three of the *Tagesmütter* were not mothers.

How much and in what way children were involved in the decision to become a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* was largely determined by their age. Young children were not perceived as being able to anticipate the impact of their mother's new work and even less seen as capable of discussing possible advantages or disadvantages. They were expected to get used to it and to come to understand it as the normal situation. Placing family day care providers' statements about their children's involvement in the decision on Hart's (1992; 1997) 'ladder of participation' shows a range from non-participation to 'consulted and informed'. Very young children cannot be involved in the decision.

> And I would say, they grew up with it [the presence of other children]. (Karin worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

With increasing age of their children mothers felt compelled to inform their children about the coming changes in the family home. Louise had been wondering how her then 4-year-old daughter would interpret the new situation.

> I had to think, did she think she is going to school because I look after somebody else's [child]. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

Not surprisingly, it was important to the women that their children should accept the situation and be able to see its advantages. They used two lines of argument to convince their children. The first was to emphasise the advantage of having a mother at home.

> I spoke to her [daughter, then 4] and everything. And she seemed to understand that. So it was like a, it was like a job, basically, working from home. Otherwise mum would have to go out to work and she would have to go to somebody else's house, which she wouldn't do. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

According to mothers this argument was well accepted, even by older children. There appears to be no difference between children who had no experience of being looked after by somebody else than their parents and the children where both parents had been working outside the home previously. The first example is Ursula talking about her seven-year-old son.

> He thought it was nice that I was at home. Then he did not have to go to the day centre anymore. ... He really liked it – coming home and having lunch with us. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

We do not know if Ursula's son saw this advantage at the time, how accurately Ursula is reflecting her son's feelings or whether Ursula offers a post-hoc rationalisation. Margaret describes the feelings of her younger daughter, and in this case her daughter confirmed her mothers' account.

> She didn't like coming into an empty house, even though she was about 14 at the time. She didn't like it at all. So she was quite – she was over the moon that I was actually working from our own home rather than being out at work. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

The other line of argument used by mothers was that looking after other people's children would provide a playmate. This argument is, of course, restricted to a certain age group.

> I just said that there was someone going to come and play with her. So she would have a friend. And just, uhm, took it from there. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

This approach comes close to the rung Hart (1997) called 'manipulation'. It is not predictable whether children become friends or even whether they will be playing together. Overall it does not seem the case that children really had the right to oppose their mothers' plans to become childminders or *Tagesmütter.* This is seldom as clearly expressed and justified as by Laura. On Hart's ladder of participation (Hart 1997) Laura's approach would be situated on the bottom rung or the lowest degree of children's participation 'assigned but informed'. When Laura took up childminding her son was 2 and her daughters were 9 and 13 years old.

> I mean, I did tell them that I was going to do it. I didn't ask them if it was okay with them. ... They were quite happy about it ... they didn't mind we had a young child coming into the house. I think the implications to them of finances or anything else wouldn't have entered into it. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

The only chance they have is to negotiate, similar to their fathers, certain conditions. Here Monika talks about her then 10-year-old son.

> Well, the little one grumbled a bit because he was worried about his toys and his room. But now we have arranged that they [minded children] know exactly they only are allowed to enter when somebody is there, then they are allowed to play in there. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

As long as older children were assured that the minded children would not enter their bedroom without permission they were less interested in their mother's activities during the day. "They've got their own lives" as Liz said or, as Birgit described her 17-year-old son's opinion,

> In principle it was all the same to him. He is not here anyway because he is at work most of the time and only comes home in the evening. (Birgit, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Once more referring to Hart's ladder of participation (Hart 1997), it does not appear that children were consulted in a way that could have altered their mothers' decision to become a family day care provider. At best children could influence the general set-up and protect some of their private space.

Registration as family day care provider

Once the decision is taken to work as a family day care provider, women in Britain have to register with their local authority to render their work legal. In Germany registration with the *Jugendamt* is necessary to benefit from the refund available for family day care. The legal framework in both of the countries determines what women (or men) have to do in order to become registered as a childminder or be issued the permission to provide family day care (see Appendix 3).

In Britain this process comprises police checks of all members of the household of 16 years or older, the formal inspection of the premises where childminding is going to take place and a decision which space can be used for childminding. This may influence the length the process from application for registration and the reception of the registration certificate takes. There were differences between the local authorities (Table 4.10). The shortest mean was observed in Gateshead at four months and the longest in Sunderland at half a year. In all of the four local authorities, two weeks was the minimum length childminders waited for their registration. However, the maximum ranged from one year in Gateshead to 18 month in Newcastle and two years in Durham and Sunderland.

Table 4.10: Mean length of time between application and registration as a childminder

Local authority	Mean length in month
Gateshead	4.0
Newcastle	5.6
Durham	5.8
Sunderland	6.3
All	5.5

Childminders who provided many years of family day care did see considerable change over the years.

> Oh no, there was no registration them days. Registration came maybe about 15 years since[11]. Then I did. As soon as registration became possible, I registered with the council. And I got a lady to come out to see me, an Under-Eights'-Officer. Very nice, very helpful as well, they were. Of course there was no bumph them days, either, to read through or anything. So, well you just brought them up. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

Of the 205 childminders who had returned the questionnaire 33 per cent had attended an information session before they applied for registration. Sixty-seven per cent had taken part in a pre-registration course. In Gateshead all of the 34 respondents had participated in the pre-registration course (Table 4.11). It is pre-condition for registration.

Table 4.11: Participation in pre-registration course

	Pre-registration course	Pre-registration course	No pre-registration course	No pre-registration course	Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Gateshead	34	100			34
Newcastle	42	89	5	11	47
Durham	43	69	10	31	62
Sunderland	19	54	16	46	35
Total	138	78	40	23	178
(Missing data: 27 of 205)					

In other local authorities the number of childminders who had not participated in a pre-registration course may reflect that this short training was not always available.

> I did a childminding course about three years ago even though I was actually registered. But the childminding course that most childminders do we got the opportunity to do because they only started a couple of years ago. So I decided I would still do it.

> Seeing that social services were paying for it. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

These courses typically comprise six sessions of two hours. They are crammed with information about the legal framework, the business side, safety, child protection, first aid, nutrition, equal opportunities, child development etc. (Ferri 1992; Gelder 1997). It appears that childminders value the information. Some of the interviewees stated that they would have liked more in-depth information, particularly about the business side of childminding. How to look after children, it was felt, is not easily taught by a course. Like childminders in another study (Mooney and Munton 1998) they felt that their experience as mothers was more important.

That the pre-registration course may have an additional purpose to merely informing prospective childminders is recognised by Evelyn.

> It was something for six weeks, just one afternoon a week. No exams or anything. It's basic common sense. But they suss you out at the time, you know, whether you're going to be sound for the job or not. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

The German legal framework is not prescriptive about the actions for registration and leaves the decision about the process to the *Jugendamt*. In Rostock prospective *Tagesmütter* were invited by the *Jugendamt* to a talk and were visited at home. A check of police records does not take place, prospective *Tagesmütter* do not have to give permission to access medical records, nor is participation in a course compulsory. The home visit has a more informal character. Karin registered as *Tagesmutter* when a refund by the *Jugendamt* for this kind of childcare became available. Here she describes the process.

> Frau Müller from the *Jugendamt* invited me. She also visited and had a look. There were the children I was looking after for years. There she could see what kind of relationship I had to the children. And she issued immediately the permission to provide day care. She did not make any concessions and I did not get any conditions of buying things or changing something. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

The descriptions by other interviewees confirm the informal, friendly character of these visits. Frau Müller does sometimes make suggestions of how to improve safety. Yet there is no written report, nor does a control take place whether *Tagesmütter* have complied with these suggestions. In Germany the mean length between approaching the *Jugendamt* with the request for permission to provide family day care and the acceptance as a family day care provider, eligible to receive a childcare refund, ranged from instantly to six months, with a mean of two months.

Taking part in a course especially designed for *Tagesmütter* is not compulsory in Germany. However the German federal *Tagesmütter* Association is strong in demanding the training of *Tagesmütter* and is active in developing training courses. It is seen as essential for improving the image and recognition of *Tagesmütter* (Schumann 1996).

Fourteen of the *Tagesmütter* (70 per cent) had attended the *Tagesmütter* course set up by the German federal *Tagesmütter* Association *Bundesverband für Kinderbetreuung in Tagespflege e.V.* The course was the outcome of the pilot scheme *Qualifizierung von Tagesmüttern im ländlichen Raum mit dem Schwerpunkt 'Neue Länder'* (qualification of childminders in rural communities with the focus on the new *Länder*) taking place 1993 - 1995. Some women had been working as *Tagesmütter* already when they took part in this course, others had seen the course advertised in the local newspaper and decided to participate. Most of the *Tagesmütter* (11) had completed the full course, 180 hours spread over 6 or 7 months. Three had attended the shortened version for women with previous childcare training. They attended 70 hours spread across 4 months. After finishing the course *Tagesmütter* received a certificate. The first of these courses started in September 1996 and was followed by another one starting in December 1997. This course ran the two strands and included the shortened version. Another course started in January 1999. Five of the *Tagesmütter* who had not attended one of the courses had been registered for less than a year. At the time when the courses were offered they may not have known about this opportunity or were not yet interested in becoming a family day care provider.

The training opportunity for childminders in England and *Tagesmütter* in Rostock were very different. However, the availability of an extensive training course in Germany depends on funding available. If *Tagesmütter* will have the opportunity to take part in this training in future is not certain.

Space used for family day care.

The choice of space in which other people's children are going to be cared for is a question of which part of the house or, indeed, whether the whole house is turned from private family space into public childcare provision space from the moment parents knock on the door in the morning. Unlike other forms of homeworking where the negotiation of the boundaries between work and family is conducted by two parties, the worker and the other family members (Sullivan 2000), the physical boundaries for family day care are additionally contested by minded children, parents and social services. Unlike tools and objects of other forms of homework, e.g. computers and paperwork, children tend not to stay where they have been put. Unlike other forms of homework the 'work' itself challenges fixed physical boundaries.

The choice about which space to use has to meet a set of criteria. It has to enable the family day care provider to offer appropriate care for children, to prove acceptable to parents and to meet expectations by the Local Authority or *Jugendamt*. Childminders in England have to comply with safety regulations set out in the Children Act 1989 and by their Local Authority (see Appendix 3).

In England the registration document will specify the rooms that can be used for family day care. Which rooms are accepted as suitable for looking after other people's children may depend on the installation of safety features, like fireguards, plug-covers, removing poisonous houseplants etc. In Germany regulations in this form do not exist. The official from the *Jugendamt* may suggest how to improve safety. However, this is not a legal requirement for registration. It is not in the power of the *Jugendamt* to exclude certain parts of the flat or house from the use by children in family day care.

The English questionnaire asked about which rooms were used for childminding (Table 4.12). Nearly all children were allowed to be present in the living room; three-quarters had access to the kitchen and just over 70 per cent to the dining room. Only just under a fifth spent some time in a bedroom at the childminder's. Only 11 per cent had a particular room set aside for childminding.

Table 4.12: Rooms used for childminding

Rooms used for childminding	Active childminders (N = 163) N	%
Living room	153	94
Kitchen	122	75
Dining room	115	71
Bed room	30	19
Room set aside	17	11
Missing data	1	

The prevalent use of space by the 163 active childminders was a combination of kitchen, living room and dining room (42 per cent); followed by a combination of kitchen and living room; and a combination of kitchen, living room, dining room and bedroom, each at 11 per cent. Ten per cent of the active childminders used their dining and their living room for family day care and another seven per cent only their living room. Other combinations were used each by less than five per cent of questionnaire respondents working as childminders.

The choice of rooms used for childminding may be guided by the necessary alterations for the sake of safety (and for receiving the registration document). Rooms that are not used for childminding do not have to be made child proof. The data from the questionnaire did not reveal a relationship between the number of rooms used and a high or low number of actions taken to make space safe. This may show childminders' reluctance to use rooms that are available but would need a lot of changes. Table 4.13 lists the actions taken by childminders in order to look after children.

Table 4.13: Changes to the house for working as a family day care provider undertaken by active childminders

Actions to be taken	Childminders (N = 163) N	%
Installing stair-gate	106	65
Installing smoke alarm	92	56
Installing fireguard	83	51
Fitting locks on cupboards	82	50
Installing medical cupboard or box	73	45
Securing glass with foil	59	36
Fitting locks on doors	37	23
Other alterations*	36	22
Removing pets	11	7
Removing plants	7	4
Removing carpets	2	1
Missing data	1	

*Other actions included fire blankets, cooker guards, socket covers and more specific actions like building a fence around the greenhouse, or additional rails on the landing.

There were only 15 childminders who stated in the questionnaire that they did not have to alter their flat or house in any way. Some of these women remarked in the margins that alterations were not necessary because all safety features were in place due to their own young children[12]. The average number of actions taken was 3.6. Ninety-three per cent of the childminders who had taken one or more actions making the space used for childminding safe had to do one or more of the following: installing a smoke alarm, installing a fireguard, installing a stair-gatè, fixing locks on cup-boards and installing a medical cup-board or box. Nineteen per cent of the 146 childminders where changes appeared to be necessary had to undertake all five alterations. Other combinations were less frequently required. The remaining 11 childminders had secured glass with foil or other measures had been necessary.

The initial preparations necessary for providing family day care are also reflected in what childminders bought the previous 12 months. The 22 childminders who had been registered less than a year stated more frequently than childminders who had been

registered a year or longer that they had bought a first aid kit, a smoke alarm, a stair-gate, a fire blanket or a fire guard (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: Purchase by childminders registered less than a year or a year and longer

	Childminders registered less than a year (N = 22)		Childminders registered one year or more (N = 141)	
	N	%	N	%
First aid kit	14	64	38	27
Smoke alarm	10	46	29	21
Safety gate	7	32	26	18
Fire blanket	6	27	11	8
Fireguard	3	14	14	10
Missing data			1	

These expenses are necessary before childminders can take up their work and, therefore, before they have earned any money from childcare. That these necessary expenses can act as a barrier of women offering childcare has been recognised recently by the British government. In June 2000 the availability of a start up grant ranging from £50 to £600 for new childminders was announced (Department for Education and Employment 2000a).

In Germany the preparations of the house or flat for the new task of family day care show a considerable contrast. The description by questionnaire respondents emphasised the necessity to adapt to children's need for play and rest. There were 13 *Tagesmütter* who answered the open-ended question about the changes to the flat or house due to their work. In six of these households an extra room was made available to children in their care and furnished according to their needs. This included a family where one son had to give up his bedroom and share with his brother. At the time these boys were 11 and 16 years old. In two households the work as a *Tagesmutter* triggered extensive building work, making, what can best be described as 'granny-flat' suitable for children. Another two *Tagesmütter* explained that they had moved to a bigger flat in order to look after children and one family rented a second flat allowing some retreat for the husband[13]. One *Tagesmutter* waited to start this kind of work until they had moved from a tower block flat to their own bungalow. Less dramatic changes included furnishing the living room with a play corner and putting up a cot or bed in the bedroom.

Compared to England these changes were more prominent and more permanent. Fireguards and safety gates can be taken off when all the children are gone. Play corners and cots in Germany stayed where they were. However, any alterations of these spaces due to preconditions of registration or perceived needs of children impact on how space is used by family members. For example, it may become necessary to climb over safety gates in order to access rooms, or the sideboard may be filled with clean nappies and nappy changing equipment or the living room houses a play corner and toys may be stored everywhere. Where in England prescribed safety features may infringe on the private space of individual family members to an extent that is unknown for the German sample, English families appear to have clearer boundaries for safeguarding private space.

Conclusion

Taking up work as a family day care provider is not an option picked from an unlimited number of opportunities open to all. Choice must be contextualised (Folbre 1994). Working as a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* is a solution to complex structures of constraint mothers face in both of the countries. They may encounter difficulties in finding employment, run into problems finding suitable childcare or face troubles earning enough money. Any combination of these obstacles increases the complexity of constraints. Although constraints operate at any given moment, individuals take decisions, which, in turn affect their future opportunities and potential restrictions.

When children alter the tasks of a household or family, when the balance of childcare and paid employment of mothers is thrown off balance, or when employment opportunities of any of the adult members change new solutions have to be found. Whilst searching for solutions the capability of individual members of earning an income in the labour market, children's individual needs for care and supervision and the ability of individual members to provide this care have to be considered. The description of women's paths into family day care provision is also a description of how households have to adapt to unexpected and unpredictable changes. It is not a rational choice to have children too delicate to attend a day care centre, or to face a breakdown of arrangements just before returning to work. None of the women would have chosen to find the quality of childcare unsatisfactory or their child unable to adapt. People in the former East Germany did not envisage losing their work and being unable to find new employment when they faced

unification. It is easier in hindsight to understand that staying on at school or taking up vocational training would have had benefits, and that the occupational choices taken in the former GDR would lead into a dead-end after unification.

It is quite ironic that it is often the breakdown of childcare arrangements in England and in Germany (although due to different reasons) that channels women into becoming childcare providers. When children's health made the use of formal childcare impossible, or not accessible women turned these restrictions on their time and mobility into the opportunity to help out mothers in similar situations and to earn money.

Yet another difference between the English and the German family day care providers is interesting. Almost all of the family day care providers were pushed out of the labour market. However, for English mothers a major obstacle in taking paid employment is the availability of informal childcare or formal childcare women accept or feel able to afford. The German women were pushed out of the labour market in connection with unification. In most cases their workplaces ceased to exist. Some women had followed their husband to a new location of employment, and considering the economic situation in the new *Länder* were not able to find employment. Although problems of finding full-time day care are less salient in the new *Länder* than in England *Tagesmütter* like childminders can offer a more flexible service than day centres. Constraints on mothers and women are then opportunities for setting up the business of family day care.

One characteristic of family day care is how it challenges the boundaries of the private. Even before the first child is taken on to be looked after, the family of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* is drawn into the process of offering this service. The decision of taking up family day care has to be at least accepted, or at best supported, by other members of the family. Individual family members' needs for privacy have to be considered. The degree of their willingness to open their private home to children and their parents may shape the service that can be offered. It may restrict the hours and determine the space accessible to other people's children.

These household negotiations are also affected by public regulations of family day care. Whereas the German legal framework is not overtly concerned with the physical safety of children, British regulation and control of childminding emphasises the physical safety of space used. The objective of ensuring children's safety justifies in the British context an intrusion into private space by representatives of local authorities. Space that is exempt

from use by minded children may stay as it was before family day care was taken up, but may have the added function of offering 'sanctuary' from public family day care and the public gaze. Rooms that are used for looking after other people's children obviously have to be shared with non-family members for some part of the day.

The different paths that channelled English and German women into family day care provision also highlight that local authorities continue to register 'what the market throws up' as Jackson and Jackson (1979) described the situation in the 1970s. In England mothers' are more likely to slip into childminding when they have either no or low qualifications. In Germany it is the particular situation of closure of day centres that throws up trained childcare workers, looking for work and a meaningful application of their occupational skills. In recruiting family day care providers 'mothers' networks' play an important role. Here information is passed on about the childcare provision and registration and women may be encouraged to explore the option of taking up family day care. Yet a more active approach by local authorities and/or for instance a family day care association can reach potential childcare providers not connected to these networks.

At the beginning of the chapter motivations of women to take up family day care were highlighted. Women hoped that it would allow them to combine the care of their children, with earning an income by engaging in work they enjoy. The next chapter picks up on one of these aspects, the business of family day care.

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[1] There were three *Tagesmütter* who had no children of their own. They worked largely in the home of the children they looked after and needed to earn money while studying at university or doing other training. For two of these women the work with children provided them with important work experience.

[2] See chapter 3 for a description of childcare qualifications in Germany.

[3] For a whole range of apprenticeships and for the admission to a *Fachschule* having gained the *Mittlere Reife* is a precondition. Similarly it is only possible to study at a German university after gaining *Abitur* (A-levels) or, in some cases, after working oneself up through the educational and training system, referred to as 'second education career'.

[4] See chapter 3 for a description of childcare qualifications in Germany.

[5] There were two *Tagesmütter* who had grown up in the former West Germany. Both women had a career plan after leaving school and had worked in their occupation. In the former West Germany (and now in the

unified Germany) young people are expected to either continue education or take up an apprenticeship, which includes (compulsory) part-time schooling (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2000).

[6] The legal framework in England underpins the approval of husbands. All persons over 16 years living or likely to be living on the premises are required to be police checked. When husbands or other members of the household refuse the police check women cannot register as childminder.

[7] Peter was interviewed jointly with Ruth.

[8] When I interviewed Laura Brian was present some of the time. Therefore I had the opportunity to ask him about his involvement.

[9] Families with only one child appear in the cell where the youngest and the oldest child are in the same age group.

[10] Families with only one child appear in the cell where the youngest and the oldest child are in the same age group.

[11] This information is not accurate (see Appendix 3). Ivy's perception may reflect the activities of her local authority. Another childminder of the same local authority also claims that registration came in 15 years ago.

[12] The survey did not reveal whether these actions taken were prompted by a general knowledge of a desirable level of safety, by information received from their Local Authority or by requirements and recommendations emerging from the initial inspection. Literature aimed at young parents (e.g. Broderick et al. 1990; Mackonochie 1996; Aynsley-Green 1997) and local authorities recommend or insisted on broadly the same safety measures in and outside the home. Additionally over three-quarters of the childminders had attended a pre-registration course and had received information material from the local authority. Therefore they have had a good idea about which safety measures are expected to be in place.

[13] There may be other reasons for building, moving or renting additionally living space. This seems particularly true in the light of massive changes in the new *Länder*. Nevertheless, the idea that children need space and good family day care needs to provide sufficient, suitable space was prominent.

Chapter 5: The Business of Family Day Care

> Really, it is self-employment. However, in the end, because you are working at home, this is lost. (Monika, working 2 years as a *Tagesmutter*)

> Interviewer, 'Do you feel like a businesswoman?' Almut, 'Sometimes yes. During the day you forget it. However, when I sit down at the weekend and do the paper work, or when I have to do a separate invoice for each child at the end of the month or at the beginning of the month. I find this bureaucracy dreadful. ... On the other hand I like to say that I am self-employed, working independently[1].' (Almut, working 4 years as a *Tagesmutter*)

> No, no, if I was a business woman, I'd be there with my clock-watch. Right, that time you're in, that time you're out and I want this. ... No, you can't. I am not a business. I don't think you can have a business for anybody's children, to be quite frank. No, it doesn't work that way. (Ivy, working 18 years as a childminder)

The task of the businesswomen childminder or *Tagesmutter* runs parallel to the daily work of looking after children. In both countries this business is regulated and restricted by laws and definitions of local authorities and taking place in the context of the market of childcare. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* perceive the business side as a distinct part of their work. The good intention of supporting childminders and *Tagesmütter* in setting up successful micro-businesses, for example by family day care associations, seem to be hampered by women's difficulties of taking on the role of the businesswoman. Ferri (1992) identified reluctance to discuss expectations by childminders and parents before childcare arrangements started and points to the aversion of both parties to talk about money matters. The emerging tension between the aim of being a businesswoman and the feeling of reluctance in discussing money matters deserves attention.

Other studies of childminding do not offer a comprehensive description of the micro-business childminding (Mayall and Petrie 1977; Jackson and Jackson 1979; Bryant et al.

1980; Ferri 1992). The pilot scheme in Germany controlled the business side of family day care and cannot be representative of the working conditions of *Tagesmütter* in the 1990s. During the pilot scheme 1974–78 *Tagesmütter* were paid a fixed rate depending on the number of children they looked after in order to encourage their participation over the whole pilot period. The initial aim of contributing to the social and economic protection of women vanished in the face of financial limitations by the involved *Jugendämter* and their fear of increasing demand for recompense by working *Tagesmütter* (Blüml et al. 1977; Blüml et al. 1980).

This chapter explores the determinants of the income childminders and *Tagesmütter* can command. It will be shown that incomes depend on the capacity or the volume of business, the hours worked and the charges fixed. The question about family day care providers' strategies to find work will be pursued. Since these items resulting in the specific working conditions of childminders and *Tagesmütter* are interwoven, the chapter is divided into the analysis of running a business in England and in running a business in Germany. The findings for the two countries are compared and family day care providers' evaluation of their working conditions are presented.

Childminding business in England

After the childminder has received the certificate of registration she is ready to run her own business. The business of a childminder involves negotiating terms and conditions, setting up contracts with parents, handling income and expenses and paperwork for the Inland Revenue and Social Services. A childminder has to find work and maintain her workload. Some of these tasks need to become routine, for instance keeping books about income and expenses; others have to be undertaken infrequently, like setting up new contracts. The main actors are the childminder and the child's parents. The business decisions that are made determine the length of the childminder's working day and her working week, and the net income she earns. They are the outcome of a combination of several elements: decisions the childminder takes concerning the service she offers and how to price it, the needs of parents and their ability or willingness to pay and the co-ordination of multiple childcare arrangements by the childminder.

Charging policies: difficult decisions have to be made

> Childminders are self-employed day care providers and are free to decide their own rates of pay and working conditions (National Childminding Association 1998a, p. 4)

The following section attempts to trace the considerations underlying the charging structures adopted by the women. Most childminders use a variable system of charging parents. They have an hourly rate for part-time children. Many offer a weekly rate for full-time children. This slightly reduces the costs to parents compared to being charged by the hour. In general this basic fee covers one meal per day and a snack. Many childminders charge two different hourly rates. The hourly rate for school children is higher, addressing the higher proportion of income per child spent on food during term time.

The basic hourly rate charged by active childminders (N = 135) ranged from £1.50 to £3.00. The mean was £1.96. The standard deviation was 26 p. The median charge was £2.00[2]. The decision of what to charge is based on what childminders think they can charge without pricing themselves out of the market.

> When I started up I asked other childminders what they basically charge. So I had something to guide mine along. It goes by where you live. ... I think most charge around the same. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

> I do an hourly rate. And at the moment it's £1.95. A mere £1.95, because I couldn't charge anything else. ... People wouldn't pay it. They are not willing to pay it. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

How much parents can afford to pay for childcare is for all childcare providers the largest obstacle to continuing provision (Callender 2000). Yet, there is a fine line between 'could not pay more' and 'would not pay more'. Childminders are aware that the cost of childcare comes out of somebody's wages.

> I could not take a hundred pounds a week off anybody who was working – [he or she would] have nothing left. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

Additionally they are not sure whether parents go out to work as a kind of luxury they chose to take up or whether parents have to seek employment out of financial reasons.

> She [a mother] always wanted it done on the cheap, always. Now I was cheap to start with. And I said, 'Jill', I said, 'You can't have things always.' I said, 'If you have children, you got to be prepared to pay a childminder. It's not my fault that you can't afford to pay them. If you can't afford to pay then you just can't afford to go to work.' Which in my mind is true. If you have a child you're responsible for it, not the childminder in the beginning. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

> And then I turn round to think, right, that adds up what I have Chloe for, it's say roughly £90. Now that coming out of somebody's wage every week is a lot, really. But they made that choice. Some people haven't, some people haven't made that choice. They'd had to do it. Fair enough. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

There is a sense of the difference the same charge for childcare can make to individual families.

> Unfortunately it's the same fee for everybody. So the people who don't get much money have to pay the same as the people who get a lot of money. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Only one childminder made clear that she adapted the charges to the financial circumstances of the parents. Her hourly rates ranged from £1.90 to £3. Yet that involves a certain knowledge of the financial position of parents. This childminder claims that 'she knows'. Another childminder who perceived the possible difference of impact childminder's fees have on the disposable income earned by parents and with that a principle opportunity to ask for higher charges, does not dare collect the necessary information.

> [Y]ou really need finding out what sort of job does she does have. Does she get paid? Is she married? Does he work? You know, and that could look, sort of, like an interrogation, really, couldn't it? ... And, I usually just up-front say, Well, I charge such and such. And that's out of the way and it's finished with. But then I later find out, I probably could have charged twice as much (laughs). And I can't do anything about it, then, you see. Because I've already said what my hourly rate is. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

In none of the interviews did the possibility for parents to receive help with paying for childcare feature. At the time of the interviews very low-income families had the possibility of offsetting childcare charges against tax. Low-income students could turn to the 'access funds' in order to receive up to 60 per cent of their childcare costs. Following the survey in October 1999 the Government replaced Family Credit with the Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) including the new Childcare Tax Credit (CCTC). It aimed to move more people into work by making childcare more affordable[3].

Overtime is dealt with in different ways. Childminders who charge hourly have to make a decision when to start to charge. For example Deborah charges overtime when parents are half an hour or more late, but not before. Others are more flexible concerning the punctuality of parents.

> She never knows what time she is going to get finished. So I just, it's just a fee. I just charge a fee. And if he's late one night, he is early the next. Oh, it's just a swings in round-abouts situation there. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

> If you're stuck in traffic or, you can't help it if something happens in the office at the end of the time, you know. You just can't help these things happen, you know. Or, like Roman the other day got a puncture. You can't help it. You can't say you have to be there at 5 o'clock. It's very nice if they are. But realistically – (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Another way to look at it is to have a cut-off point at which time charges become considerably higher. Louise explained that looking after children after 6 p.m. costs £2.50 an hour, since anything before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. are seen as unsociable hours and

> [T]hen that's interfering with my personal life because 6 o'clock is when, well that is where my husband was coming from work and now when my partner comes in that time. And, so it was a case of that that was like our family time. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

The decision about the basic charge a childminder demands includes what this basic charge covers. In connection to this decision it is necessary to define extras, for example additional meal, outings, buying toys and materials etc, and how much to charge for these. The questionnaire asked childminders what was covered by their basic charges. Women charging an hourly rate were most likely to cover with this charge snacks (81 per cent) and the dinner (56 per cent), followed by outings (55 per cent) and parent-and-toddler groups (43 per cent). Parents of babies are always expected to provide the food. The few childminders who stated a daily charge or a weekly charge were more likely to provide more without charging extra. Most parents had to supply nappies and other body care products and it was expected that they pay for activities like soft play. However, the interviews uncovered that the practice of charging for extras is less planned, less businesslike and more complicated than the analysis of the survey revealed.

> I am quite lucky [with] the fact most of them supply their own food. ... You start off, when they are babies and they bring everything. They just keep going. Now Barbara, Roberta's mum supplies her own dinner and her tea, depending on when I've got her. Like today I've got her all week, so she'll have her dinner and her tea there. Next week I've only got her in the afternoon, so she'll just bring her tea. Barbara supplies her dinner, but I give her her tea. So it's just what the parents expect of you. Now in the holidays Paul and Danielle, who are going to the school – I had them from 8 o'clock in the morning 'till 4 o'clock in the afternoon. And I usually supply their dinners. You know, so it's just the

> unspoken agreement you have with the parents, really. I don't charge. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

> In the summer holidays, I mean, I said I would give her dinner. Because when I give Roxanne [Evelyn's daughter] her dinner – I mean half a tin of spaghetti. I mean, I may as well open for two people in one [go]. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

There are another two circumstances the childminder has to confront when she is deciding upon her charges. She has to make up her mind, whether to offer a reduction for the second child or consequent children of one family and she has to think about how to deal with prolonged holidays taken by parents, for example those who work as teachers. Both decisions have an impact on the childminder's annual income.

Just under two thirds (61 per cent) of the 163 active childminders offered a reduction of charges for the second child and consequent children. This reduction ranged from 10 p to £2.00 with an mean of 80 p (standard deviation 32 p)[4]. It appears to be common to reduce the hourly charge by half.

Also just under two-thirds of active childminders (61 per cent) said they charged a retainer during parents' holidays. However, when the childminders answered the question about the level of the retainer 55 childminders (34 per cent) stated that it was not applicable. Sixty-nine childminders (42 per cent) asked for half the usual fee. Five childminders asked for £10 a week, three charged £15 a week and only three childminders asked for the full fee.

An estimate of the impact of those two possible reductions on income levels was impossible. The information about the children looked after by the childminder did not include whether they were siblings. The same accounts for the holidays taken up by parents.

Determinants of income

The income of a childminder is determined by the number of children she has on her roll, by the hours each of these children are looked after, and the emergent pattern of children attending her care. The following section attempts to disentangle and clarify the determinants, reflects on findings of previous research projects and highlights the outcome for childminders in the Northeast of England.

Capacity: "No, I've got enough children now"

Most childminders do not fill all their places. Table 5.1 shows how many children childminders had on their books. Altogether 445 children were looked after by 163 childminders. Of these children 372 were under the age of eight and 71 over the age of eight (the age of two children was missing). Twenty-five children were sponsored by Social Services and of these three had special needs. Another nine children, not sponsored by Social Services also had special needs.

Table 5.1: Number of children looked after by active childminders, excluding her own

	Childminders N	%
1 child	41	25
2 children	41	25
3 children	39	24
4 children	17	10
5 children	15	9
6 children or more	10	6
Total	163	100

On average the responding childminders were looking after 2.7 children. When only children up to the age of eight years are considered (the cut-off point for the need to register with the responsible Local Authority according to the Children Act 1989, see Appendix 3) the average number of children in the care of childminders decreased to 2.3. Since the Children Act 1989 includes the childminder's own children it is necessary to look at all the children present in the childminder's household (see Chapter 8, Figure 8.1). Even then the average number of under-eights is only 2.9 per childminder[5]. This is just under half of the upper limit recommended in the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulation.

One possible explanation for this under-capacity is that there are fewer parents looking for childcare than there are places available. However, registration with Social Services specifies the age of children. Older children, including the childminder's own, may have to be taken to and collected from playgroups, nurseries or schools. Additionally looking

after children over a longer period of time has its own dynamics and may be against the business interest of the childminder.

> So you've got, you have the good times when they are little, but you've got to accept, when they get older that – I mean there might be some day, sometime where eventually I've probably got them all at school and nobody during the day. Well, that is not working, that is not what I am wanting to do. I am wanting to be kept busy during the day. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

This can leave childminders in a position where no suitable child can be found to fill the vacant places. Furthermore the situation is complicated by school holidays.

> Two would be my ideal. ... I would do school pick-ups. ... I would go to offer school pick-ups if you only had them for an hour or two. And you are going to have them on holidays. You got to think of when they are off school on holidays, if you have three to four children. You are going to have three children [to start with] because your own are on holiday. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years. She has three children under 8 of her own)

There are also practical reasons that limit the number of children a childminder can take on.

> I can only ever have six children. Although my oldest son and this school child are no longer in Social Services hands, because they are over eight. So I could take more, legally. But I can't fit them in the car. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Other reasons not to take on as many children as the registration certificate permits are connected to the childminder's ideas of the standard of care and the effect it may have on the children in her care and the effect it may have on the childminder herself.

> No, I wouldn't take any more now. Well, I couldn't. ... Really it's very hard, because I have been established for so long. And people know me. That people come and say, 'Please, will you just

> do this, please will you just do that.' But really, you've got to stop and say, 'No, no, I've got enough here, now, you know. I can't do any more.' And it's settling new children in all the time. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

> A full-timer and my two part-timers is just nice for me. I had my visit last week, my inspection from Social Services. And she said, you know you could take a few more. And I, [very low] no [laughs loud]. I don't want to be stretched, over stretched, you know. And I think that's just a nice amount. They all play nicely together. And I don't feel I'm rushing round, running after them. I can actually spend time and sit and play with them and give them my time, you know. And I think if I had many more, I don't think it would work. I couldn't care for them properly the way I would want them looked after. And I think that's really important. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

Hours: "We are quite flexible"

The hours a childminder works is something she has no great influence over. Parents are looking for a childminder in order to go to work (or occasionally to achieve some respite from childcare duties). The service offered by childminders has to meet parents' work needs, albeit without trespassing the limitations set during registration or thereafter, and without rendering other commitments impossible to fulfil.

> I have two children on the night-time on a Monday and a Tuesday night. Now, their dad works shifts. But I usually get a list well in advance of the days that he wants me to pick them up. And it's only very occasionally that they change this. ... So we are quite flexible. As long as I can fit them in, I'm flexible. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

In her role in enabling parents to go out to work the childminder seems to be the end of a chain of cause and effect, involving employers, employees and unpredictable

circumstances. This issue will be picked up again in Chapter 7. Table 5.2 lists how many hours per week individual children are on the books of childminders.

Table 5.2: Hours per week children are in the care of the 163 active childminders

	Children N	%
Up to 10 hours	156	35
11 – 20	148	33
21 – 30	68	15
31 – 40	36	8
41 and more	26	6
Missing data / changing from week to week	11	3
Total	445	100

Over two-thirds of the 445 children in the care of 163 childminders are booked for only up to 20 hours. This is a strong indicator of the fragmentation of childminders' working days and the difficulties of taking on children up to full capacity. Yet Table 5.2 does not show what patterns emerge when more than one child is on the books of a childminder and the length of childminders' working days.

Defining childminders' working time

Research reaching back as far as 1977 has found repeatedly that childminders work long hours. Mayall and Petrie (1977) found over half of their sample in London worked 10 hours or more a day. In the Oxfordshire study half of the childminders had a working week of 40 hours or more (Bryant et al. 1980). A survey by the National Childminding Association in 1986 reported more than half of the childminders working 40 hours a week and longer (Cohen 1988).

Yet accounting for the exact working hours of a childminder is difficult. There is the time of childminding fixed in the contract, but that does not include overtime, time to prepare the house or prepare activities before the children arrive or time to clear up after the children have gone home. Another grey area is the time childminders spend talking to parents. According to the diary sheets attached to the questionnaire this often involves cups of tea. Does this count as working time to be paid for by parents? Similarly it is unclear whether the hours where there are no children in the care of the childminder

between her morning and her afternoon shift count as working time. In the case of school children looked after during term time before and after school it seems reasonable not to count these hours as working time. The childminder can take up other jobs in this time[6]. However, most childminders have a mixed pattern of pre-school and school children and their commitment to look after them all during school holidays restricts their flexibility. The last problem arises out of the difficulty of defining what working with children entails and the fact that childminders may also work on behalf of their own families during their working time. A clear division between private, unpaid time and public, paid time cannot be traced. I would like to offer two alternative calculations of working time.

The first definition of working time is the calculation of the time children other than her own are in the care of the childminder[7]. This will be called 'attendance time'. Here it is assumed that the time childminders spend on preparations for the children they look after, the clearing up and the talking to parents is counter balanced by the time childminders work on behalf of their own family during her working hours. The weekly attendance time childminders in the Northeast of England worked ranged from 6 to 59 hours (N = 159). The median weekly attendance time worked was 30 hours and the mean was 29 hours, with a standard deviation of 12.5 hours. This shows that the length of working time is scattered within the range. There does not seem to be a typical attendance time a childminder works.

The second definition of working time will be called 'start-stop time'. As the name implies this definition considers the time between the arrival of the first child and the departure of the last child as working time[8]. Start-stop time assumes that caring for children involves tasks that are engaged in without the children necessarily being present. Additionally it allows for the restriction of taking up other forms of employment or self-employment.

The weekly start-stop time worked ranged from 6 hours to 59 hours, the same range as attendance time. The median start-stop time worked a week was 38 hours. The mean start-stop time was 34 hours per week with a standard deviation of 12.4 hours. As with attendance time, the mean does not adequately represent the length of a typical working week of a childminder. Table 5.3 shows that the weekly start-stop time is skewed towards a long working week.

Table 5.3: Childminders working part-time, full-time attendance time and start-stop time

Hours per week	Attendance time		Start-stop time	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 10	14	9	11	7
11 - 20	36	22	17	10
21 - 30	34	21	27	17
31 - 40	47	29	44	27
More than 40	28	17	62	38
Missing data	4	2	2	1
Total	163	100	163	100

A sixth of the childminders had a working week of more than forty hours attendance time. About a third of the active childminders looked after children full-time, defined as 31 - 40 hours per week. Only nine per cent of the women worked as childminders for 10 hours a week or less. However, an examination of the start-stop time indicates that nearly two fifths of childminders had a working week exceeding 40 hours. Over a quarter of the childminders worked full-time start-stop time, a sixth worked between 11 and 30 hours but only seven per cent engaged in childminding less than 10 hours a week.

A comparison of the hours worked with previous research is impeded by the lack of knowledge about the authors' definition of working time and by the different data presented. Only Mayall and Petrie (1977) made clear that their definition of working time resembled that of start-stop time. However they looked at the length of a working day. We do not know if childminders worked all days of the working week or at the weekend. Although two studies (Mayall and Petrie 1977; Bryant et al. 1980) mention that some of the children attended playgroups, however the extent of this not described. A cautious interpretation of the comparison of working time with previous research shows that current childminders work shorter hours compared to women looking after children 25 years ago. This may reflect that the increase in mothers' employment over this period is particularly concentrated in part-time employment. There are also more places in different childcare provisions available and parents may put together a care package for their

children (Wheelock and Jones forthcoming). In 1998 15 per cent of pre-school children used more than one type of care (Office for National Statistics 2001b).

The time worked by childminders is quite different from the attendance time of individual children (see Table 5.2). Table 5.4 explores the pattern emerging from children attending. Here the focus is on the child who has the longest attendance time per week at individual childminders.

Table 5.4: Patterns of length children attending the care of active childminders

	Childminders N	%
Only children booked in for up to 10 hours a week	16	10
At least one child booked in between 11 and 20 hours a week	54	33
At least one child booked in between 21 and 30 hours a week	41	25
At least one child booked in between 31 and 40 hours	30	18
At least one child for over 40 hours per week	21	13
Missing data	1	1
Total	163	100

The difference between the length individual children were attending and the length of the childminder's working week is the outcome of multiple arrangements. Children's days at the childminder start and finish at different times. They may even not overlap. The examination of start-stop time worked on each day of the week offers further insight into the working week of a childminder. Table 5.5 informs about the activity rates of childminders on each day of the week.

Table 5.5: Activity rate of childminders with children on their books on particular days of the week

	Childminders working that day N	Childminders not working that day N	Of all active childminders (N = 161; 3 missing) not working that day %
Monday	141	19	12
Tuesday	141	19	12
Wednesday	143	17	11
Thursday	140	20	13
Friday	122	38	24
Saturday	5	155	97

Between 11 and 24 per cent of all active childminder respondents (N = 160) did not work as a childminder on any one regular working day. Sixty-nine per cent did not work on a Saturday. None of the childminders looked after other people's children on a Sunday.

Table 5.6 situates the start-stop time into the hours of the particular day of the week. The length of the working day ranged from 1.25 hour to 13.5 hours with a mean of 6.8 hours and a median of 7.5.

Table 5.6: Start and finish of active childminders on particular days of the week

	Childminder working that day (N = 160; 3 missing)	Earliest start Time	Working before 8 a.m.: childminders working that day N (%)	Latest finish Time	Working after 6 p.m.: childminders working that day N (%)
Monday	141	6.30	27 (19 %)	21.15	15 (11 %)
Tuesday	141	6.30	23 (16 %)	20.00	15 (11 %)
Wednesday	143	6.30	28 (20 %)	20.00	11 (8 %)
Thursday	140	7.00	29 (21 %)	20.00	9 (6 %)
Friday	122	6.30	24 (19 %)	21.15	8 (6 %)
Saturday	5	8.00	0	19.00	1 (17 %)

The median earliest starting time, the time when the first child arrived from Monday to Friday was eight a.m.[9]. The median latest finishing time, the time when the last child was collected from Monday to Friday was five p.m. Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 demonstrate that

childminders supply services that are not covered by other childcare providers[10]. Up to a fifth of childminders working at a particular day take in children early in the morning and just over a tenth are working late in the evening. A small number of childminders work on a Saturday.

Offering a service to parents, flexible enough to meet parents' childcare needs requires childminders to manage complex timetables. This is further complicated by children's use of other childcare services or attendance at school. The childminder's work timetable also has to be integrated into her own family's timetable of commitments and preferences.

"The money is atrocious"

Bryant, Harris and Newton (1980) described the pay received by childminders in 1977 as 'abysmally low'. An adjustment to 1998 prices shows that childminders in Oxfordshire received payment ranging from 39 p to £5.30 an hour, or an average of 92 p an hour per child, ranging from 28 p to £2.65. The majority of the childminders in London received the equivalent of between £17.65 and £24.71 per week per child (Mayall and Petrie 1977). Assuming this is the pay for a fifty-hour week that would result in the equivalent of an hourly rate per child between 35 p and 49 p (my calculation).[11] Out of this income they had to pay meals, bus fares, toys and some paid the fees for playgroups. There were no attempts in either study to work out the net income, that is the money left over after deduction of all expenses and income tax. Additionally the income was reported as very insecure due to non-paying parents, absent children or a breakdown of childcare arrangements at short notice. Nevertheless, two thirds of the childminders in each sample neither felt exploited nor were dissatisfied with the pay received. Both studies put forward two explanations for childminders' acceptance of the low income they can command. Looking after children has a low status, and childminders felt they could not ask for more, since the money came out of the wage of mothers, who needed money for themselves (Mayall and Petrie 1977; Bryant et al. 1980). By 1986 Cohen found the equivalent of the hourly rate charged by childminders per child ranged from 84 p to £1.67 and the NCMA recommended a charge equivalent of £45.09 for a 40 hour week (Cohen 1988)[12].

Later surveys looking at how much parents pay for childcare to a childminder continue to highlight low pay. In 1990 the median payment for an hour of care with a childminder was the equivalent to £1.61 (Meltzer 1994)[13]. A survey of the readers of a women's

magazine concluded that childminders in 1990 earned an average of the equivalent to £1.68 per hour (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995).

The level of income a childminder receives is determined by how many hours childcare she provides for how many individual children and by the amount she charges per hour. A childminder who can fill all the places she is registered for every day will achieve a considerably higher level of income than childminders who do not. In order to emphasise the difference to working hours this unit will be called 'list hours'[14].

The Northeast survey revealed that the list hours of the 163 active childminders ranged from 6 hours to 148 hours with a mean of 47 hours and a standard deviation of 30 hours. Multiplying the list hours of one week with the basic hourly rate a childminder charges yields the weekly income before expenses. There were 144 childminders who had provided information about both about their list hours and their basic charges (Table 5.7, line 1). Their income ranged from £13.60 to £259 a week. Their average income was £88.99 with a standard deviation of £54.90. The median income was £78.60. Using the definition 'attendance time' in order to calculate the hourly rate of income resulted in a mean hourly income of £2.98 and a median of £2.76 (N = 138). Using the definition 'start-stop time' the mean declined to £2.60 and the median income to £2.48 per hour (N = 142).

So far only the income before expenses has been calculated. The survey asked childminders about their expenses in the last working week. Many childminders did not answer this question or answered it incompletely[15]. There were only 72 childminders (44 per cent) where the weekly expenses could be added up (Table 5.7, line 2). The weekly income after the deduction of stated expenses ranged from £3.90 to £182. They received a mean income of £71.58 with a standard deviation of £40.81. The median weekly income was £74.95.

A common approach amongst childminders according to NCMA members is to regard between half and two-thirds of the income earned as expenses[16]. This is supported by information material received when taking up childminding, stating "Two thirds of a childminder's earnings is treated as expenses for tax and National Insurance purposes" (City of Newcastle upon Tyne 1994, p. 18). According to the Inland Revenue there is no general acceptance that two-thirds of a childminder's income should be treated as expenses (Inland Revenue Newcastle 2000). Yet it may well be that a consideration of all

accepted expenses may result in these costs approximating two-thirds of their income. Taking this into consideration results in an even lower net-income and an even lower hourly rate received by the childminder at the end of the week (Table 5.7 and Table 5.8). When half of the income is deducted from the income the weekly net-income ranges from £6.80 to £129.50. The mean is £44.46 with a standard deviation of £27.50 and a median of £39.30. When two-thirds of the income is deducted as expenses the weekly net-income is reduced to an amount between £4.53 and £86.33 with a mean of £29.64 and a standard deviation of £18.33. The median was £26.20.

Table 5.7: Weekly income earned by active childminders before and after expenses

	Mean Income	Standard Deviation	Median Income
Income before expenses (N = 144)	£88.99	£54.90	£78.60
Income after expenses deducted, according to survey (N = 72)	£71.58	£40.81	£74.95
Income after 1/2 deducted as expenses (N = 144)	£44.46	£27.50	£39.63
Income after 2/3 deducted as expenses (N = 144)	£29.64	£18.33	£26.20

The calculation of the hourly net-income of childminders depends also which definitions of net-income are used and what is considered as working time. The results are compiled in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Hourly income earned by active childminders before and after expenses

	Attendance time (N = 139)*		Start-stop time (N = 143)*	
	Mean £	Median £	Mean £	Median £
Income before expenses	2.98	2.76	2.60	2.48
Income after 1/2 deducted as expenses	1.49	1.38	1.30	1.24
Income after 2/3 deducted as expenses	0.99	0.91	0.87	0.83
Income after stated expenses (N = 72)	2.15	2.11	1.93	1.86

** The number of childminders for the row 'income after stated expenses is lower with N = 72*

It is noteworthy that the responding childminders stated their expenses lower than the commonly accepted definition allows. The total of the expenses listed by 72 respondents ranged from 7 per cent to 85 per cent of their income. Of these 72 childminders, 83 per cent stated their expenses as less than half of their income and 94 per cent as less than two-thirds. Yet this does not change the fact that childminders even with the lowest estimate of expenses earn very little. Depending on the definition of expenses and depending on the definition of working time the highest hourly mean net-income was £2.98, the lowest just 87 p. It is well below the minimum wage of £3.60 introduced in April 1999.

Finding children and competing

Finding and maintaining work takes place within the limits set by the Local Authority and the limits arising out of the childminder's own commitments. The time it took to fill places was reported as problematic by a quarter of the childminders in the PSI Survey of Childcare Providers 1999 (Callender 2000). Each child taken on has to fit into the pattern of daily routines as they develop. This is influenced by the age of the children and their attendance at parent-and-toddler groups, playgroups, nursery or school. Parents of more than one child prefer to use the same childminder for all their children. Childminding takes place in the context of the availability of places at other childminders and the availability of other forms of childcare.

> I've got two school children on Monday and Tuesday from one school. I've got three school children on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from a different school. I've got one little girl now a Tuesday and Thursday who is two. I have another little girl who is three on Thursday and Friday morning. And I have a baby cousin on a Friday morning. And in about six weeks time I am going to get a baby on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday one week and on Monday, Tuesday the next week. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Research findings that childminding arrangements are unstable and that children seem to change childminders or change from a childminder to other forms of care more frequently than children using other childcare facilities (Meltzer 1994) can also be viewed from the perspective of the childminder. A high turn over rate of children renders her working

situation insecure and she is frequently in the situation of having to find new children to look after. Of the ten childminders interviewed six months after they had filled in the questionnaire, only three still looked after the same children[17]. The following description of the changes taking place since completion of the questionnaire appears to be quite typical.

> Paul I don't have any more because he is at the Comp[rehensive School]. And Tina I don't have anymore because her mum has changed her hours and, so I don't have her. So now, at the minute I've got two school children and three young ones. But then, as I say, with Roberta starting school next week, so you are going to go to three school children and two during the day. So I've started a new baby. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

The way childminders find and maintain business can be broadly divided between passive and active strategies. One-hundred-and-three childminders, that is half of the 205 childminders are not active in looking for work in the sense that they wait to be contacted by parents who need childcare and who have obtained the childminder's telephone number from Social Services, childminder groups or informal networks. This approach is supported by knowledge about the list held by the Local Authority and their duty to inform interested persons about the availability of childcare places. With registration childminders should be entered in the list of childcare facilities local authorities have to hold. In Durham, this information was additionally held in a database accessible through computers in job centres and libraries. Yet the information available to parents looking for childcare is often not accurate or up-to-date. The National Childcare Strategy includes an improvement of information services at local and national levels (Department for Education and Employment 1998). Thirty-nine childminders were members of a group of childminders who maintain a list for themselves. Usually this is connected to NCMA membership.

Table 5.9 shows the strategies of finding work used by childminders who actively sought children. There was only one childminder who used all five strategies. Most childminders used only one (29 per cent) or two (13 per cent). Childminders working less than 3.5 years (the average number of years worked) were more active in seeking work than childminders who had worked longer ($p < 0.05$). The questionnaire did not show a

statistical relationship between the activity level displayed in finding work and having children on the rolls. Neither educational qualification nor childcare related qualifications or training had any impact on activity rates in finding work. Also the fact that a member of the household received Income Support or Family Credit, and the statement about the need to earn money showed no statistical relationship to the activity rate in looking for work.

Table 5.9: Registered childminders' strategies to find work

Strategy	Childminders (N = 184)	%
Putting word around in parents-and-toddler groups	60	33
Advertise in local shops	44	24
Advertise in local paper	14	8
Approach parents	4	2
Sign up with agency	5	3

This seems to indicate that active strategies like advertising do not work any better than approaches that appear to be passive. Approaches to finding work that may be regarded as appropriate business behaviour for other forms of business may seem less suitable for the business of caring for children. It may seem difficult to reconcile the personal relationship of caring with striving to develop a calculating business approach. This may prevent childminders becoming more active in finding work. Here is one possible outcome. Ivy was desperately short of work when she was interviewed.

> And I certainly wouldn't advertise. ... I don't think, well I don't think children are a commodity as such. So I wouldn't, no. Oh, every child I had, as I said, it's been word of mouth. I've either got them from other parents or it is someone that knows me from chapel where I go. But no, I certainly wouldn't advertise. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

Another childminder who puts adverts into the local shop windows believes that

> [N]ine out of ten people go to Social Services. Because, I mean, anyone could advertise and not be properly registered. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

Most of the childminders interviewed identified the most important way of finding work as 'word of mouth'. This can take several forms from information reaching parents about the childminder in a roundabout way to a more pro-active approach whereby childminders make people aware that they look after children and have places free or finally this word of mouth approach can even merge into networking.

> I just more or less finished the registration. And I used to do Brownies as well. And one of the Brownie leaders said, 'Oh, I didn't realise you're registering. I've had somebody inquiring if you could take two children. So would you be interested?' And I said, 'Yes.' So, I've had more or less two children lined up for when my registration came through. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

> It seems as if I've been all right lately. ... Once everybody gets to know you, now especially on this street. People know there is a childminder in the street. So if anybody is ever stuck.... (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

For childminders who are already looking after children a crucial source for starting off the 'word of mouth process' are the parents of these children.

> A lot of my work comes from word to mouth. Because the mums I've got are obviously pleased with what I do. And they had said to other people – that if somebody said, 'Oh, I'm looking for a childminder.' – 'Oh, you should get this Laura who lives round here.' So, you know, I've got a lot of work by word of mouth. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

> I never look for work. Because I've got such a big reputation that it just, it falls in. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Finding work in this way serves also as a confirmation of the parents' satisfaction with the service and this is understood by the childminder as proof of their good work. The connection between finding work and perceived quality is also strong in the childminders' network. Since local authorities hold lists of registered childminders but are not aware of

vacant places quite often parents approach childminders who have no vacancies. Many of the well-established childminders make a point of helping these parents to find another childminder and with that help, each other to find work.

> And we can give somebody a number, that we know well as childminder. That we know personally would be a good childminder. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Satisfaction with the number of children and confidence in being able to maintain the number of children on her roll is conducive to this kind of networking. Childminders who cannot find children to look after according to their wishes find themselves competing with other childminders and other childcare facilities. Yet, their potential to compete is extremely limited. The most obvious area to compete is with respect to charges.

> There is a new place just opened just further down the road, who are taking children on. Sort of like, on a half-day basis, in the morning or the afternoon and things like that, you know. Because a lot of parents seem quite happy for them, the child, to go somewhere like that in the morning. Maybe the grandparents are to have them on the afternoon to make it cheaper for them. So cost is the very thing. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

However, childminders felt that parents should not make their choice on the basis of price and they disliked the idea that they might have been chosen due to their low charges. One way out of being chosen for the 'wrong' reason would be a fixed rate charged by all childminders.

> Again, if there is a parent going looking at all the different minders, you don't want that parent to go to you as opposed to me, because you are cheaper. Because that would be wrong. Then the parent has gone to you for the wrong reason. And you might not be the right childminder. So if you charge the same fee than at least they are looking at the person, the environment, rather than the amount of money that it's going to cost. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

We have seen before that childminders find it difficult to set their charges and the solutions individual women find differ. However, even where childminders feel that the only way forward would be an obligatory rate for one area, they doubt that those could be established successfully[18].

> But even if you did that, if you said, right across the board, we want everybody to charge £2 an hour, you could have a mum, who comes to see you. And you go and say, 'Well look, I'm supposed to charge £2 an hour. But I'm quite happy to accept £1.40 because you're on a very low wage. And, as long as you don't tell anybody (laughs).' So you couldn't make it a law sort of thing, could you? You couldn't, you know, enforce it. You couldn't enforce it, because it's happening in your own home. And you make the contract with the person and, you know, so. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

The dilemma of finding oneself competing on the basis of charges and knowing that it is not the best way to organise childcare is further complicated by the problem of fitting in children within the limits prescribed by registration, into the pattern of daily routines and to meet parents' specific needs for childcare.

> [O]ne particular lady I was speaking to, charges £2.50 an hour. And when I told her I charge £1.70, she was like, really, sort of quite angry about it. Because, she said, you know, 'how can we ever get work, if you charge £1.70 an hour?' ... But I said to her, 'Well, really, I can only take so many children. (Laughs) I'm not stopping you getting work. I've got one child. I am, I don't want ten, you know.' And so I'm not a threat to them because I'm charging less. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

If there are other criteria on which parents base their decision rather than costs and hours, they are not very clear to childminders. Some of the interviewees guessed that the crucial factor is a rapport with parents established right at the beginning. The uncertainty childminders felt about the criteria used by parents was combined with the perception of parents as hesitant when they were deciding on the childminder. Ferri's (1992) research showed childminders and parents finding it difficult to discuss the content of their

contract including what form this care should take. This leaves both adult parties relying on hunches. Longer standing childminders give this advice to parents, outlined here in Alison's words.

> You must visit as many minders as possible, and one, you'll just walk through the door of one house and say, 'Oh, that's comfortable, I'll leave my child here'. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Other possible criteria mentioned by childminders were the size of the house, access to a garden, the presence of pets, the level of tidiness and cleanliness, and the kind of toys available to children. However, when childminders were talking about other day care providers they also seemed to be astonished that parents would choose a childminder living in a smaller house or that parents would leave their children at childminders with – in the interviewee's eyes – an insufficient level of tidiness and cleanliness.

A well-directed emphasis on other qualities, for example, childcare training, special abilities, a special approach to childrearing does not seem to be employed by childminders in order to attract work. There was only one childminder who emphasised one of her skills as outstanding and different to that of other childminders. Laura is very proud of her abilities to employ self-made flashcards to teach reading. When she was asked if her opinion of good practice featured in discussion with other childminders in order to raise standards or was ever used in order to compete with each other, she simply answered, "no." Another childminder, Ruth, who is very aware of the low status of childminders talked about a possibility of raising the image, an idea put to her by her Under Eights' Officer.

> The way they [other childminders] are making it more professional is, they portray themselves, they are making a CV for when the parents come in you show them. ... It's just like I've done a First Aid course. It's something else you put in and make it like a booklet about yourself and your family and the house, the garden. ... It's something nice to give to the parents and they can take it away. This is what I've done. This is me. These are the children we had. This is what we do. Hobbies, just things that

> generalise, that give them a picture of what you are. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

Ruth has not put together the information about her, her family and the service she offers. It may offer a good opportunity to think about the particular strength of services provided, and if taken up by more childminders it may facilitate the debate about good practice and parents' expectations.

The National Childcare Strategy aims to improve information about childcare options and to support parents when looking for childcare places. ChildcareLink is an interactive website, offering advice on how to choose childcare and which financial support is available. It collates information from Early Years Development Partnerships, including addresses and contact information of childcare providers. This information continues to be patchy (many childminders are not included) and often the information forwarded is restricted to the bare minimum and out-of-date[19].

Since parents have not been interviewed no claim can be made about how parents take their decisions. It may be possible that the complications arising out of parents' needs and childminders restrictions in offering childcare services render a competition on monetary terms irrelevant. The result seems to be that childminders can portray themselves as not competing with each other by setting low charges, as they did during the interviews – but accuse other childminders and other childcare providers of doing so.

The business of *Tagesmütter*

Running a business as a *Tagesmutter* in Germany was for this sample closely connected to the registration with the local *Jugendamt*. Most of the *Tagesmütter* I came across were working at home. Two of the interviewed *Tagesmütter* worked jointly with another *Tagesmutter*. The *Tagesmütter* who had been interviewed used two expressions in order to describe their employment status: self-employed and freelance. Running their business involved negotiating conditions with parents, fixing those in a contract and fulfilling record keeping requirements set by the *Jugendamt* in order to receive the refund. Additionally they have to keep some records in order to be able to prove their status to the German inland revenue. Another aspect of the business of the *Tagesmutter* is that of finding and maintaining work. The main actors are the *Tagesmütter*, the parents and the

Jugendamt advisor who is responsible for advising *Tagesmütter* and parents and for making decision about the subsidy for this form of childcare.

Charging policies: restricted decisions

The need to negotiate the basic charges for the service hardly ever arises. How much the *Tagesmutter* receives depends on whether the hours of care fit into the definition of part-time or full-time given by the *Land* (see Appendix 4). The proportion paid by the parents depends on their income situation and is decided by the *Jugendamt*. Only when parents are not eligible to receive the subsidy or when the hours do not fit in with the description by the *Jugendamt* of part-time work do *Tagesmutter* and parents have to find another solution. According to the questionnaires two *Tagesmütter* had a fourth child on their roll. According to the guidelines established by the *Land* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern this child would not be subsidised. Until one of the subsidised children left (at the time of the interview) the parents were paying £121 a month excluding money for food – the amount of money they would pay for a (subsidised) place in a nursery. This is approximately £41.50 more per month than the share of parents pay to a *Tagesmutter*. A mother using the other *Tagesmutter* became dependent on *Sozialhilfe*[20] and, according to the *Tagesmutter*, lost her eligibility for a subsidised place. Her child became then the fourth on the list, part-time. The *Tagesmutter* received £36 a month and food money but no subsidy from the *Jugendamt*. Another *Tagesmutter* felt embarrassed to take the parents' contribution for a part-time place when the child is only attending at most 12 hours a week. Therefore she agreed that the parents' contribution would be £3.57 every time the child attended the agreed three hours[21].

Tagesmütter in Rostock usually charge extra for food. This appears to be a continuation of the childcare policy as it was practised in the former GDR. Parents using day nurseries had only to pay a contribution towards the food. The extra charges for food ranged from £1.61 to £2.32 per day and per child. The mean amount charged was £1.87 and the median £1.79 with a standard deviation of 20 p. Two *Tagesmütter* working in the household of the parents were not responsible for buying food and consequently do not charge. One *Tagesmutter* did not charge because

> I cook too much anyhow most of the time. Whether another child sits [at the table] and [eats] another two potatoes and half a

> kohlrabi[22] or – that is so very little, so that it hardly costs anything. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

Another *Tagesmutter* could not state how much she received for food, since she and the parents shared the expenses as she wrote down in the margin of the questionnaire 'one way or another'.

Remarkable is a comparison of the amount *Tagesmütter* charge for food with the recommendation of the *Tagesmütter* Association on *Land*-level. Of the 16 *Tagesmütter* who do charge 9 asked for £1.79 (DM 5) per child and day. Even the highest charge of £2.32 per day and child was well below the recommendation of the *Tagesmütter* Association *Land*-level of £2.64[23]. The lowest charge per child and per day was the outcome of meticulous bookkeeping. This *Tagesmutter* stressed during the interview that she is not competing with other *Tagesmütter* using food money, but does not require more money[24]. However, it seems that the going rate of £1.79 (DM 5 per day, or for full-time children DM 100 per month) has a strong influence and is taken up by new *Tagesmütter*.

> When I started I asked several *Tagesmütter* how much they take. Can you cope? And everybody took £1.79. That is how I came to £1.79. And in the end it is sufficient. They do not eat that much yet. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Charging for overtime is less common. Overtime is time worked outside the agreed hours as stated in the contract. It can take the form of parents just collecting children later than agreed or that when the *Tagesmutter* is asked to work longer hours, perhaps over night or at the weekend. The nine *Tagesmütter* who have a set charge for an hour's ordinary overtime charged between £1.79 and £3.57. Setting the charge high allows then to control the length of their working days. Karin just recently started to state an overtime charge in her new contracts.

> I fixed now that an hour overtime is DM 10 (£3.57). So that parents try to collect their children as quickly as possible. And not first of all do their own things – going shopping, beautician, hairdresser. That is something you notice after a while. When they realise their children are happy, then they follow their own affairs first. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

Another *Tagesmutter* achieved the same aim by asking parents to buy a toy for the use of all the children in her care when they had been late without arranging the change of hours beforehand. Parents were able to change the daily attendance time of children as long as this did not result in a longer working week than agreed. When a child stayed longer one day she expected the parents to use her services for fewer hours the next or a following day. In effect she operated a kind of flexi-time system for parents.

Working at the weekend or looking after children over night seemed to be rare and was not included in the basic charge paid jointly by *Jugendamt* and parents. Working at the weekend was charged by one *Tagesmutter* at £5.36 an hour. One *Tagesmutter* asked for £17.85 and another one expected to be paid £42.86 for a weekend. Three *Tagesmütter* expected £17.85 per night. Two women charged an overnight stay at £3.57 an hour. These decisions, which resulted in very unstandardised charges, were influenced by the women's own family commitments, their perception of how urgently parents needed childcare and perhaps what parents could afford to pay.

Determinants of income

The number of children on her roll and their classification as full-time and part-time children determines the income of *Tagesmütter* in Rostock. To take on any additional children over and above the ones subsided by the *Jugendamt* is unlikely. Parents are aware of the availability of subsidy of childcare costs and childcare provision is relatively good (see Chapter 3). Taking up an unsubsidised place would, if the *Tagesmutter* insists on receiving the *Land* defined charge, result in charges more than three times the amount of parents' contribution (see Appendix 4). When two *Tagesmütter* worked jointly together parents and *Jugendamt* paid them as two separate *Tagesmütter.* The research came across two of those partnerships. The following sections will adhere to the approach taken by the *Jugendamt* and include numbers of children, hours and income earned as if they were working separately.

Capacity, volume: "They play very well together"

Most *Tagesmütter* did not look after the maximum of three children subsidised by the *Jugendamt* (Table 5.10). There were 46 children looked after by the 20 respondents to the questionnaire.

Table 5.10: Numbers of children looked after by individual *Tagesmütter*

Children on roll	Tagesmütter N	%
1 child	5	25
2 children	6	30
3 children	7	35
4 children	2	10
Total	20	100

The average number of children a *Tagesmutter* looked after was 2.3. The number and age of her own children does not restrict the number of children a *Tagesmutter* can take on. The absence of a restriction based on the *Tagesmutter*'s own children did not lead to a large number of young children being present in the respective households. The average number of all children under the age of five was 2.45; the average of all children under the age of eight was 2.55, this rose to 3.25 when all children under the age of 16 were included. The five *Tagesmütter* who had only one child on their roll were the women who intended to stop after the child had outgrown their care or who planned to engage in different work, including the two students. There was only one household which, including the minded children, had four under-fives, and another where four under-eight's were cared for (see also Chapter 8, Figure 8.2).

The children looked after were between six month and four years old (Table 5.11) [25]. Overall the *Tagesmütter* were satisfied with their workload. The women with only one child on their roll looked after the child rather as a favour to the parents or felt that their other commitments, their own family or study, did not allow them to take on any more.

Table 5.11: Age of children looked after by *Tagesmütter*

	Children N	%
Children under 1	4	9
1 year olds	16	35
2 year olds	16	35
3 year olds	7	15
4 year olds	3	7
Total	46	100

One of the *Tagesmütter* who had been interviewed before the questionnaire was sent out was unhappy about having only one child to look after. By the time she filled in the questionnaire she had one more child on her roll. The *Tagesmutter* with four children on her roll was happy with this number. She argued that four children played better together. Anke made the same point.

> Yes, I would like to care for four children. It is better working with an even number of children. You can see that when the children play alone. There always is one left out. Now I have got these five-year-old girls. They play very well together. The little two-and-a-half year old often sits at their side and does not know what to do. She cannot join in. The others do not accept her as equal. And then I have to sit with her and keep her busy. It would be nice to have a child of the same age. That you have always partners – that would be nicer. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

According to Monika there are attempts by the *Tagesmütter* Association to convince the *Jugendamt* on *Land*-level to increase the number of subsidised children to four, at least for women with childcare training. Although a fourth child would impact on the income of childminders none of the interviewees argued with financial reasons for the increase of numbers on their roll.

Hours

Children in the care of *Tagesmütter* did not attend other childcare facilities without the *Tagesmutter*. Therefore there was no difference between 'attendance time' and 'start-stop' time. Of the 19 *Tagesmütter* describing their last working day in the questionnaire only one woman worked less than 8 hours this day. The hours worked ranged from 3 to 12 hours. The mean was 9.67 hours that day and the standard deviation 1.4 hours.

The hours *Tagesmütter* work are determined by the needs of parents. The allocation of subsidy by the *Jugendamt* depends on the need, that is work commitments, of parents. Over half of the children stayed over 40 hours a week in the household of the *Tagesmutter* (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Hours per week individual children are in the care of the *Tagesmutter*

	Children N	%
Up to 10 hours	1	2
11 – 20	3	7
21 – 30	3	7
31 – 40	13	28
41 and more	26	57
Total	46	100

Eighteen (90 per cent) of the 20 respondents worked 40 hours or more a week[26]. The other two *Tagesmütter* worked 9 and 25 hours respectively a week. The earliest arrival of the first child was by six o'clock in the morning. Over half of the *Tagesmütter* had started their working day by half past seven in the morning. The last child left at seven o'clock in the evening[27]. Half of the *Tagesmütter* had no children to look after quarter past five in the afternoon. The four *Tagesmütter* working jointly together had the advantage of being able to work in shifts. They aimed to limit their working day to eight hours.

The impact of hours on the income of *Tagesmütter* is restricted to part-time or full-time work as long as the child is subsidised. According to the questionnaire there were only two children who were not subsidised. Both were part-time children. The cut-off point for part-time places is 30 hours a week. Disregarding the two part-time children financed solely by the parents there were 5 children where the *Tagesmutter* received the part-time fee and 39 children where the *Tagesmutter* received the full-time rate.

Income

By 1996 only two *Länder*, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein had fixed the structure and amount paid for family day care by *Land* laws (Greese et al. 1996). A survey in the late 1980's in West Germany showed the rates of refund to *Tagesmütter* set by the *Jugendamt* of the district or commune varied considerably – from very low to extremely low (Tietze et al. 1993).

A comparison of the income of *Tagesmütter* in the new *Länder* with previous research in West Germany does not appear meaningful. Also the charges before unification stated by one of the interviewed *Tagesmütter* is not directly comparable with the income achieved

by *Tagesmütter* now, due to different income structures and subsidy schemes in general[28]. Almut had cared for children for pay before she registered with the *Jugendamt* in 1996. In 1995 her charges were £178.57 (DM 500) per month and per child, or £44.64 per week.

Thirty per cent of the refund paid (including parents' contribution) are supposed to cover expenses and 70 per cent are supposed to recompense for the costs of up-bringing (Innenministerium des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 1997). There are two rates of refund available, one for full-time placements (between 31 and 50 hours a week) and one for part-time placements (up to 30 hours a week). In 1999 the full-time rate paid £265.71 per month and the part-time rate was £159.29 per month (see Appendix 4). Both rates include up to 30 per cent of parents' contribution. *Tagesmütter* charge extra for food.

Tagesmütter in Rostock are paid monthly. For the sake of easier comparison the monthly income was divided by four reflecting the weekly income of childminders. The monthly income can be found in a footnote where it is appropriate. Table 5.13 demonstrates the income earned with and without food money.

Table 5.13: The weekly income of *Tagesmütter*

	Range £	Mean £	Standard deviation £	Median £
Income excluding food money (N = 20)	29.64 – 208.21	137.22	61.93	132.86
Food money (N = 16)	4.46 – 33.93	21.06	9.43	21.79
Total income	29.64 – 240.36	153.18	72.20	150.71

The weekly income received from the *Jugendamt* and the parents without the money for food ranged from £29.64 to £208.21. The mean income was £137.22 and the median weekly income was £132.86.[29] Most *Tagesmütter* received extra money for meals and snacks. The money received per week for food by the 16 respondents ranged from £4.46 to £33.93. The mean of the money received was £21.06.[30] The sum of the money received by the *Jugendamt* and the parents, including the money for meals and snacks the weekly income received by the 20 *Tagesmütter* ranged from £29.64 to £240.36. The mean weekly income was £153.18 with a standard deviation of £72.20.[31]

There is no data that allows calculating the net-income of *Tagesmütter* in Rostock. Seven of the twenty *Tagesmütter* did not keep books at all. Of the remaining 13 there were only 3 women who kept their books accurately. Another had set up a separate bank account for the income and outgoings connected with her work. The others had some system to account for the use of the money for food.

The tax allowance for *Tagesmütter* in Germany at the time of the research was £171.43 per month per child in full-time care or £102.86 per month per child in part-time care, and represents what the German tax authorities acknowledge as expenses arising out of this type of work. This amount is just below two thirds of the money received by the *Tagesmütter* in Rostock without the extra for food or 57 per cent of the income including the money for food[32]. Yet, the *Tagesmutter* who kept her books exactly over a period of three month claimed that her expenses in this period of time were only 20 per cent of her income. The observations made in connection with the interviews showed, that there were large differences between the practices of individual *Tagesmütter*. Some of these women certainly spent a lot of their income on the children in their care, for example on out-door and in-door toys; others appeared to keep such spending to a minimum. The impracticality of calculating the exact amount of expenses and therefore the exact amount of net income for English childminders is repeated when attempting to calculate the net income of German *Tagesmütter*. With regard to the comparison with the income of English childminders two definitions of expenses and therefore two possibilities to calculate the net-income of *Tagesmütter* will be offered in Table 5.14 and Table 5.15. The first assumes that half of the income can be regarded as expenses. The second assumes that two thirds of the income has to be deducted as expenses. Here the money for food is included in the income.

Table 5.14: Weekly income of *Tagesmütter* (N = 20) before and after expenses

	Mean Income	Standard Deviation	Median Income
Income before expenses	£153.17	£72.196	£150.71
Income after 1/2 deducted as expenses	£77.22	£35.3843	£75.36
Income after 2/3 deducted as expenses	£51.47	£23.5896	£50.24

Table 5.15: Hourly income of *Tagesmütter* (N = 20) before and after expenses

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
Income before expenses	£1.33	£5.00	£3.14	£3.27
Income after 1/2 deducted as expenses	£0.66	£2.50	£1.57	£1.64
Income after 2/3 deducted as expenses	£0.44	£1.67	£1.05	£1.09

The wide range of incomes reflects the varying number of children on the roll of *Tagesmütter*. Women looking after one child receive approximately a third of the income a *Tagesmutter* can command who has three children on her books. Charging extra for food, as most *Tagesmütter* do, increases the income. Working very long hours reduces the hourly income.

Working jointly with another *Tagesmutter* demands another set of decision making. The *Tagesmutter* who has the premises for day care at her disposal may claim a greater share of the joint income to cover her expenses. In one of the *Tagesmütter* pairs the owner of the premises kept accounts exactly and claimed a larger share of the money paid by the *Jugendamt* and the parents. Yet, an insight in her openness towards her colleague was not obtainable.

Finding children: the advent of competition

Finding and maintaining work takes place within the boundaries set by the *Jugendamt* by limiting subsidised places to three per *Tagesmutter*. The women looking after children in the parents' home may be restricted to the care of these children. However, one of the *Tagesmütter* working in the child's home looked after two other children from different families there, too. The two pairs of *Tagesmütter* working shifts have to take on children that fit into this pattern. Apart from the time the shifts of the *Tagesmütter* overlap there should not be more than three subsidised children present.

The need to find children occurs when women start to work as a *Tagesmutter* and when children leave their care (assuming the woman decides to continue to work as a *Tagesmutter*). Half of the responding *Tagesmütter* were looking after the same children they had started with. The length they had been working as a *Tagesmutter* ranged from four months to just under two-and-a-half years. The mean length was 11.5 months. Seven of the 20 *Tagesmütter* had had a change in the children they cared for. These women had been working as a *Tagesmutter* for between 6 months and 20 years with a mean of three

years. One of the *Tagesmütter* who had a change of children within the first six months had moved and therefore the care arrangements were impossible to maintain. For another two *Tagesmütter* it was not clear if there was a change of children or if they had set out with a smaller number and increased this since. Compared to previous studies of former West German *Tagesmütter* in the old *Länder* childcare arrangements appear to be more stable. A study in Berlin 1984 found that 45 per cent of all arrangements lasted less than six months. However in Hamburg the average length of childcare arrangements in family day care lasted 16 month (Laewen et al. 1992)[33].

Half the respondents did not yet have to find new children. This may explain why not many *Tagesmütter* seem to have developed a strategy on how to approach this. However, the sample includes two women who looked only after one child as a favour to their mother or parents and did not intend to stay a *Tagesmutter*, two students in the need of money and a teacher intending to return to her job within the next year. The most important sources of work are being on the list of the *Jugendamt* and word of mouth. Putting word around in the neighbourhood or spreading the news about an available place amongst friends and acquaintances can support the latter.

> Word of mouth. Those who ring up from time to time and ask whether there is a place free, they are all through word of mouth. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

> Here in this house everybody knows that I am a *Tagesmutter*. It got round in our estate because we are here in this estate already six *Tagesmütter*. ... And you are observed and approached on the playgrounds moving about with so many small children. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

The satisfaction of parents using the service of the *Tagesmutter* is one of the facilitators of word of mouth.

> When somebody is satisfied with my work and a colleague becomes a parent then it was passed on: well, go there. There it is nice and all right. Have a look. ... I could live with this, if I knew from tomorrow I have no children on the roll anymore. ... Then I'll advertise or I could ring up two who are waiting. I really have

> no problem because I have done it many years and word of mouth works well. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

Neither the questionnaires nor the interviews revealed the potential of advertising. Anke stated that she chose her latest child from several respondents to an advert. The *Tagesmutter* who felt disadvantaged by a lack of parents send along by the *Jugendamt* was thinking of announcing her service in the local newspaper. However, when she had tried that before there was no response. Also another *Tagesmutter* who had put up many adverts in local shops etc. did not succeed with this approach.

The other list of active *Tagesmütter* is the list of members of the local *Tagesmütter* Association. If all places are taken at one *Tagesmutter* she may try to help parents to find another family day care provider.

> Once one of the *Tagesmütter* Association had phoned because somebody was looking in this area. And she had thought I would be an obvious candidate because of my address. But I said no, immediately. I only want one [child]. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

The active women in the *Tagesmütter* Association provide more general support in finding work. Their public relations work aims to inform parents about the existence of this form of childcare and the low costs to parents. At the same time this public relations work informs women who consequently wish to become a *Tagesmutter* and are then competing with the established ones.

Using the price for childcare to compete is made impossible by the rates fixed by the *Jugendamt*. Also, different rates of money for food seem to hold very limited possibilities to gain parents' favour. Parents seem to be guided by other characteristics. Two *Tagesmütter*, each living in a flat in the centre of the town reported that they lost a child just before the contract was signed to a *Tagesmutter* who lived in a house with garden. Another *Tagesmutter* was chosen because her ideas of childcare reflected in her choice of toys corresponded with that of the parents.

> They [the parents] had been somewhere else to have a look and refused one or the other place. They did not like it there and they did not have the necessary rapport. There was one who had

> furnished an extra playroom with loving care. However, this was just filled with stupid plastic toys and with that it was not that nice anymore. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

Additionally, the range of different care set-ups offers parents choice. There are *Tagesmütter* whose care resembles that of a small nursery, including those who work in pairs; there are *Tagesmütter* with childcare training and there are *Tagesmütter* living in different areas of the town. Parents have the choice between what individual *Tagesmütter* view as good quality family care. As parents can choose a *Tagesmutter* that appear to suit best so can *Tagesmütter* decide not to go ahead with childcare arrangements.

> Building a relationship – usually you realise during the first conversation if you can build a rapport. I'll have a close look and I have a settling in period. That is where you realise whether you have the same ideas or whether you differ a lot. Then I say, I am sorry, I decline. (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

Another complicating factor is the approach taken by the manager in the *Jugendamt*. During the interviews some speculation about her role in finding work and her influence on the competition amongst *Tagesmütter* became apparent. Some interviewees felt that what happened at the *Jugendamt* was inscrutable and had the impression that *Tagesmütter* did not have the same chance to have their names passed on to parents looking for childcare.

Tagesmütter who work together as a team on one of the women's premises have to work out how to deal with a possible lack of work and income. Almut is working jointly with Frau Niese[34] in the self-contained 'granny flat' in her house. Almut has been contemplating what action to take when a shortage of children on their list would occur She is adamant that rather Frau Niese would lose work before Almut herself would give up family day care or suffer a decline of income. With that Almut's colleague takes the role of an employee, although not in the legal sense. This relationship demands in Almut's view some distance from her colleague.

> I think somehow it is (sighs), you know, my property. And it could happen that there are only three or four children. ... And then it is easier to say, 'Frau Niese, I am sorry but I have no more

> work for you. There are no children.' If you have too much contact, if you are too intimate and then you have to say – it would be too hard. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Taking on work as *Tagesmutter* in the partner's house may result in lower income and even greater job insecurity. Yet it offers some women the opportunity to work with children when their circumstances do not allow them to offer family day care in their own home.

Working conditions compared

In both countries the number of children a family day care provider can take on is restricted. In England the registration document shows how many children can be cared for by the childminder 'at any one time', depending on the age of children. In Rostock the constraint works indirectly by restricting the number of children where the costs of family day care is subsidised against the background of good general provision of childcare facilities. Most of the places funded are full-time places[35] and the costs falling directly to parents are, compared to England, low (see Appendix 4). The form of regulation as implemented in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany precludes the need to orchestrate complicated timetables ensuring that there are no more children in one's care than specified in the registration document. *Tagesmütter* have no more than four children on their roll. Because they are more likely to fill all of their three subsidised places, due to the absence of a complex pattern of commitments, the average number of children on their roll is only slightly lower than that of English childminders, who can take up to six children at any one time.

A comparison of the length of the working days shows that childminders' experience is more fragmented than that of *Tagesmütter*. *Tagesmütter* are more likely to start earlier in the morning but also finish earlier in the afternoon. Comparing the daily working hours of childminders and *Tagesmütter* (Table 5.16) shows that the working conditions of childminders are more diverse than those of *Tagesmütter*. According to the questionnaires there were no children in the care of a *Tagesmutter* after seven in the evening compared to the last child leaving a childminder at quarter past nine at night. The hours childminders work start at just over 1 hour but may increase to 13.5 hours. The mean

working day had a length of just less than seven hours. *Tagesmütter* worked between 3 and 12 hours, where the women working only 3 hours was the exception. Their mean working day lasted just over nine-and-a-half hours. Ninety per cent of *Tagesmütter* worked eight hours a day or more. Comparing the length of a working week yields similar results. Eighteen per cent of childminders worked a week of 40 hours or more 'attendance time' respectively 39 per cent worked 40 hours or more a week 'start-stop time' compared to 90 per cent of the *Tagesmütter* working a week of 40 hours or more. These women worked every day from Monday to Friday.

Table 5.16: Comparing working days of active childminders and *Tagesmütter*

	Range of hours	Mean hours	Earliest start	Latest finish
Childminders	1.25 – 13.5	6.8	6.30 am	9.15 pm
Tagesmütter	3 - 12	9 .5	6 am	7 pm

The wide range of hours worked by childminders seems to mirror the findings of other research on homeworking women (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995), including the extremely long working weeks some micro-business owners put in (Baines and Wheelock 1997). *Tagesmütter* worked even longer hours per week. Since children go home at the end of the working day a family day care provider is not able to work for pay 'until she drops', as Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) described the situation of homeworking women. However, the difficulties of distinguishing between paid and unpaid working time may disguise a very long working day.

The income childminders and *Tagesmütter* could achieve was determined by the number of children, their attendance time and in the case of English childminders the basic charge received. In Germany the classification as part-time or as full-time child and the rates fixed by the *Landesjugendamt* were the crucial determiners. The average income before the deduction of expenses of *Tagesmütter* was nearly double as that of the average income of childminders, at £153.17 in the Northeast of Germany and £88.99 in the Northeast of England. Table 5.17 presents a comparison of the income of childminders and *Tagesmütter* in terms of median and the range.

Table 5.17: A comparison of the income of active childminders and *Tagesmütter*

		Childminders* £	*Tagesmütter** £
Income per week	Median	79.80	150.71
	Minimum	13.60	29.64
	Maximum	259	237.14
Income per hour**	Median	2.49	3.27
	Minimum	0.50	1.33
	Maximum	5.89	5.00
Weekly net-income, ½ deducted as expenses**	Median	39.90	75.36
	Minimum	6.80	14.82
	Maximum	129.5	118.57
Weekly income 2/3 deducted as expenses***	Median	26.20	50.24
	Minimum	4.53	9.88
	Maximum	86.33	79.05

* The calculation is based on the information provided by 141 childminders and 20 *Tagesmütter*

** Calculation is based on start-stop time

*** It was not possible to account for the expenses exactly. The amount of money spent on e.g. food, toys, and pushchairs varies extremely. One half and 2/3 are day care providers' estimates and meet approximately the allowance for expenses for tax purposes in Germany.

A comparison of the hourly income before expenses are deducted continues to show a higher income received by German *Tagesmütter* (Table 5.17). They were paid a median of £3.27 compared to the childminders' median of £2.49 per hour 'start-stop time'. The difference is less pronounced due to the longer average working hours of *Tagesmütter*. Very low income from which expenses have to be paid is also typical for other homeworkers engaged in routine white-collar or manual activities (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995; Felstead and Jewson 1996).

"But you can't be envious of somebody who works more than eight hours a day."

It is remarkable that neither childminders nor *Tagesmütter* were very clear about their earning powers. Childminders are aware that they earn very little but cannot point out how little. There are several reasons for this. Meticulous bookkeeping was uncommon. The beginning and the end of a working day are difficult to define. On the one hand some family work can be undertaken while children attend. On the other hand it is not clear if

the time when parents are in the household of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* should be counted as working time. Mothers of young children are not sure whether the money for buying toys can be labelled expenses. A common approach of childminders seems to be to equalize the hourly basic rate with hourly income.

> Would you go out to work for £1.70 an hour, or someone to call into your house to basically turn your house up-side down? (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

> The financial side, the money is atrocious, you know. It must be the worst paid job, I think. Uhm, working in the old folks home was just as bad, mind. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

German *Tagesmütter* forwarded a more positive evaluation of their income. Some of them also showed that their assessment was taken from a long-term perspective.

> A *Tagesmutter* these days – this [the money] is sometimes not earned by women going out to work all day. ... Now that I am self-employed – I knew that before: self-employment means that I would need at least one-and-a-half years to make a profit. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Yet, ignoring the long hours they work or the expenses incurred, accepting the extent of insecurity or even a more realistic stance towards the short-term implications does not explain satisfactorily why childminders and *Tagesmütter* appear so lax in finding out the potential of their business. Throughout the interviews but also in the questionnaires it emerged repeatedly that the business of a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* is something special because these women are caring for children.

> It's just something that I enjoy doing, you know. It's just, uhm, it's definitely not for the money, you know. It's definitely not for that, because you don't earn a lot at all, you know. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

> You couldn't do this job for money. Just from the money you could earn, you don't, not much and a lot of what I earn goes back on to the children. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Looking only at the business potential of this form of childcare misses out other advantages.

> Certainly, financially, this in not the way to earn a golden nose. However, considering your health – you haven't got stress, you are calm, you are balanced. And you are here for your family. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Whether the majority of family day care providers would describe themselves as stress free may be questioned. Yet the advantages of earning some money and of being there for children was for many women the initial motivation to become a family day care provider. This too they share with other female homeworkers (Allen and Wolkowitz 1987; Huws and Korte 1990; Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995; Felstead and Jewson 1996; Huws et al. 1996).

Conclusion

The examination of the micro-businesses childminders and *Tagesmütter* run shows that restrictions arising out of the respective legal frameworks, the interpretations by local authorities and the *Jugendamt* as well as out of the context of other childcare provision mediate the business opportunities of family day care providers and result in very low income in both countries. Overall the conditions for business of *Tagesmütter* in Rostock appear less fragmented and less complicated than the business of childminders in the Northeast of England. The crucial difference between the regulation of the business of childminders and *Tagesmütter* is that children in family day care in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern are subsidised, as children in other forms of day care are. The form of subsidy available and the further interpretation of the *Jugendamt* impacts on the capacity a *Tagesmutter* can offer, her working hours and her income.

The different regulatory frameworks in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Britain result in another crucial difference between childminders and *Tagesmütter*: the presence or absence of the need or possibility to negotiate the basic charges. It has consequences for the settlement of contracts, the competition amongst childminders and *Tagesmütter* respectively and the income that can be earned.

Whether British parents and childminders enter into business contract with each other depends on the age of the child, hours of childcare needed, the price parents are willing or

able to pay and whether the child fits into the established pattern of commitments. Additionally both sides have to assess whether their ideas about childcare match satisfactorily and have to predict whether childminder and child can build a positive relationship. Against the background of the difficulty in talking about the relational aspect of family day care (see Ferri 1992) and the limited choice of suitable childcare places parents can afford (Mooney and Munton 1998; Department for Education and Employment 2000b), this part of the decision making process may be underdeveloped.

In Germany the initial business negotiations are less complicated. The age of the child and the hours of childcare sought do have to agree with the ideas of the *Tagesmutter*. Yet, since the restrictions concern the number of children on her roll (not the number of children 'at any one time' as in England), the danger of overstepping a legal boundary does not exist[36]. The basic charge depends on whether the needed hours are within the part-time or within the full-time range (below or above 30 hours a week) and both rates are fixed by the *Land* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The subsidy of childcare costs leaves parents paying considerably less for childcare compared with English parents.

The impact of competition is somewhat difficult to grasp in both countries. There were instances where childminders or *Tagesmütter* were clearly in competition with each other. Yet it appears that it is very difficult to decide on which grounds to compete. To use charges is possible in Britain. Then again, this is limited by the low income childminders receive in the first place. In Germany only the amount of money received for food has a potential to be used for competition and is negligible. Competing on the ground of quality of childcare offered seems to feature only in a covert form and was presented by childminders and *Tagesmütter* as assumptions why parents took preference of one family day care provider over another. The influence specific to the situation of German *Tagesmütter* is the advisory role of the *Jugendamt*. Possible attempts to match parents and *Tagesmutter* by the responsible officer may be perceived as negative interference in their business. *Tagesmütter* were left feeling vulnerable and powerless.

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* also have to find their place in the childcare landscape. In England the rising number of day nurseries and Out of School schemes (Department for Education and Employment 2000b) may grow into serious competition for childminders. In Germany *Tagesmütter* compete with an established provision of day care. Both childminders and *Tagesmütter* offer the cheapest form of paid, formal childcare to parents compared to other provision and family day care is the most flexible service available.

The form looking after children takes is more diverse in Germany than in Britain. Parents can choose between fetching the *Tagesmutter* into their home, placing their child into the normal routine of another family or the attempt to recreate the work of a nursery. What a *Tagesmutter* offers is guided by her possibilities, for example space, and seems to be informed by her ideas of good childcare. It is not overtly used for competition matters. In Britain the differences of the sort of care on offer are much less pronounced. It does not seem to occur to childminder that they could be used in order to compete with others.

The evaluation of their working conditions made by childminders and *Tagesmütter* reveals that hours and pay on their own cannot explain why family day care providers enjoy their work nor why they continued to run this micro-business. To some extent the pleasure women receive from this work and the perceived benefits can be connected to the motivation of women entering this form of self-employment, as we have seen in Chapter 4. Chapter 6 picks up on the content of working as a childminder or *Tagesmutter*. It will examine what their working day is like and analyse the advantages and disadvantages that may arise out of developing routines

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[1] The German word for self-employed and working independently is the same: *selbständig*

[2] The National Childminding Association found the same median at £2.00 in a survey of their members 1997 for the childminders in the Northeast. However the range of hourly charges differed with a minimum of £1.30 and a maximum of £2.50 (National Childminding Association 1998a).

[3] Parents can now receive per week a subsidy of 70 per cent for up to £100 of their childcare costs for families with one child and for up to £150 for families with two or more children. It can only be speculated if this will encourage childminders to increase their charges.

[4] There were 64 out of the 163 active childminders answering the question about to what the reduction for the second child amounts to.

[5] Social Services have to consider older children in the childminder's household when deciding upon the number of children the childminder will be registered for. The average of all children under the age of 16 present in the household of the childminder, including the minded children was 3.4.

[6] Childminders who have other jobs often work in playgroups or in schools as care assistants or dinner ladies

[7] For this calculation only the hours children were present according to the time sheet (see Appendix 5) were added up.

[8] For this calculation the information given on the time sheets was used (see Appendix 5).

[9] The mean for the earliest starting time stated that the average childminder starts to work at just before 9 a.m.. The difference to the median is the result of school children attending childminders only after school.

[10] Parents-and-toddler groups, playgroups or schools are not or not always suitable to cover childcare during parents' working hours. Most suitable are public or private day nurseries. However, access to public day nurseries is limited and primarily for children 'in need'. Places in private day nurseries are limited too and may not cover parents' need for childcare. For example the Childcare Audit in Newcastle showed that Private Day Nurseries were open from Monday to Friday. The earliest opening hour was 7.15 a.m. By 6 p.m. the last one was closed. Most Private Nurseries are open between 8 am and 5.30 p.m. (Jones et al. 1999)

[11] The Retail Prices Index is the base for the internal purchasing power of the pound. This information is regularly published by the Central Statistical Office and now the Office for National Statistics. A pound in 1977 is worth £3.54 in 1998 (Office for National Statistics 2001b).

[12] A pound in 1986 is worth £1.67 in 1998 (Office for National Statistics 2001a)

[13] A pound in 1990 is worth £1.29 in 1998 (Office for National Statistics 2001a)

[14] For example a childminder with one child on her roll attending five days a week for eight hours has accumulated 40 list hours at the end of the week. A childminder who has two children on her roll attending five days a week for eight hours has compiled 80 list hours she will be paid for. In the case that both children arrive and leave at the same time the length of the childminder's working week (in this case for both definitions, attendance time and start-stop time) has not changed.

[15] Some of the household's expenses, for example the fuel bill, count as expenses. It may not be practical or easy to work out the proportion of these for the last working week. Usually childminders do that once a year when filling out the tax declaration for the Inland Revenue.

[16] This is the result of negotiations between the Inland Revenue and the NCMA concerning expenses, which can set against tax liability. This includes reasonable estimates of expenses directly arising out of the childminding activity, for example food, toys etc. but also a third of the household's fuel bills, ten per cent of the rent and a tenth of the income for wear and tear. These proportions are applicable when the childminder is working full-time. Childminders working part-time can deduct pro rata

[17] However, one of these women had changed her hours. When she filled in the questionnaire she looked after the child only a few hours a week to settle her in. Now she cares for this child full-time. Ferri (1990) interviewed 30 childminders and parents using their services. When she returned after approximately 10 month for a second interview half of the childcare arrangements had been terminated.

[18] The NCMA had been attempting to establish an obligatory rate for one area or group of childminders. In order to unify rates and to improve women's working conditions the NCMA did publish recommendations. 1992 the Office of Fair Trading stopped the publication of it. The working in 'Guidelines on Childminder's

Pay and Conditions' from April 1992 was considered as infringing on the Restrictive Trade Practice Act 1976 (National Childminding Association 1992).

[19] ChildcareLink (http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk) has been accessed several times 2000/2001. Some of the records held were the last time up-dated over 12 month ago. Sometimes the information about a childminder was merely her name and address, including her telephone number. More substantial information included the number of vacancies (often 0), costs, No Smoking Policy, wheelchair access, special diet and details and from which schools children could be picked up. Most included Opening Times. Some Local Authorities provided information about facilities, which read interestingly uniform (e.g. kitchen, open space, out-door play, TV/Video, quiet room, pets, visit & outings, sleeping area). The disclaimer reads "These pages have been developed to help you identify childcare in your area. The information has been extracted from various sources, which include Local Authorities and Childcare bodies. Any updates necessary are input as quickly as possible, however we cannot be held responsible for inaccurate or misleading information. The information provided should not be used to assess suitability or quality of childcare provision." (http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk/discler.htm)

[20] *Socialhilfe* is roughly comparable to Income support.

[21] The *Jugendamt* pays the subsidy for a part-time place and is aware of the hours the child is looked after.

[22] Kohlrabi is a vegetable

[23] The recommendation is based on the bookkeeping of a group of *Tagesmütter*. The break down of their expenses over a period of four weeks seemed to show that £2.64 was sufficient to offer a balanced diet. One of the interviewees took part in this exercise.

[24] A quick look at her list of food expenditure for the children in her care showed that the children received a well-balanced, freshly cooked diet.

[25] One *Tagesmutter* who had been interviewed but did not return the questionnaire offers additionally lunch for two school children. After the lunch these children return home to do their homework.

[26] Additional to the 20 *Tagesmütter*, who returned the questionnaire, there were three *Tagesmütter* who had been interviewed but had not returned the questionnaire. All three had a working week of 40 hours or more.

[27] One *Tagesmutter* who had been interviewed but did not fill in a questionnaire works until eight o'clock at night.

[28] Before unification Karen charged Mark 150 per month and child. This has to be seen against the background of policies that supported families and subsidized the up-bringing of children in various ways. For example by 1987 child benefit had increased to Mark 50 for the first child, to Mark 100 for the second and to Mark 150 for each subsequent child. Students and mothers in training received additional Mark 60. Single student mothers or single mothers in vocational training received additional benefits if a day care place could not be offered. Women with one child received Mark 125, with two children Mark 150 and with three or more children Mark 175 (Gysi et al. 1990).

[29] The monthly income without money for food ranged from £118.57 to £832.86 with a mean of £548.89 and a standard deviation of £247.7256. The median monthly income was £531.42.

[30] The money the received per month for food by the 16 respondents ranged from £17.86 to £135.71. The mean of the money received was £84.24 with a standard deviation of £37.70. The median was £87.14.

[31] Adding up the money received by the *Jugendamt* and the parents, including the money for meals and snacks the monthly income received by *Tagesmütter* ranged from £1188.57 to £961.43. The mean monthly income was £612.71 with a standard deviation of £288.78. The median was £602.86.

[32] Setting the refund received by *Tagesmütter* in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern results is an interesting discrepancy between the amount earmarked for expenses by the *Land* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Federal Tax Authorities. The *Land* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern assumes 30 per cent of the refund paid where as the amount accepted by the Tax Authorities amounts to approximately two thirds of the refund paid to *Tagesmütter.*

[33] Different explanations can be found resulting in a variety of suggestions of how to improve the stability of family day care arrangements. Laewen (1992) found that the introduction of a short preparation period improved the length considerably. Also a clarification of the financial limitations of this kind of work seems to be an important element of the preparation of *Tagesmütter* (Schattner 1996). Wingerter (1995) found that an age difference of more than 30 month between the minded and the own children, a relevant childcare qualification and increasing age of the *Tagesmutter* all contributed to a more stable relationship. The survey of West German *Jugendämter* showed that the two most frequently situations leading to ending of childcare arrangements at the *Tagesmutter* were breakdowns due to changes within the family of the child with 32 per cent (like unemployment or giving up employment by the mother, changed working hours, pregnancy etc.) and due to conflicts between parents and *Tagesmutter* and parents with 30 per cent (Tietze et al. 1993).

[34] Almut calls her colleague by her family name and uses the polite, formal way to address her with '*Sie*'. This may read slightly awkward only because I have chosen to use first names to anonymise the interviews. However, during most of the interviews the formal way addressing each other was maintained following German convention. In this case I have chosen to 'translate' the formal of address in order to demonstrate the formal relationship Almut prefers to maintain although they have been working together a year. It goes without saying that *Frau Niese* is not the real name of Almut's colleague.

[35] This fits an understanding of the need of regularity and stability for children. Using several different forms of childcare provision is not seen as appropriate for young children.

[36] Additionally the patterns of commitments of German family day care providers are much less complicated than those of childminders. Chapter 6 looks at this in more depth.

Chapter 6: 'We've got into a nice little routine'[1]

> You have got some liberties you would not have working in a day centre. You can manage your time in a different way. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)
>
> As *Tagesmutter* you carry the whole responsibility, all by yourself. In the day centre there is always somebody sitting above you. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

Self-employment implies the control of one's time and of one's activities. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* clearly enjoy being their own boss. One-hundred-and-thirty-five or 83 per cent of 163 active childminder agreed or agreed strongly with the statement 'I like to be my own boss'. Like other micro-businesses owners they appreciate a more self-determined way of life and work (Wheelock 1992; Baines and Wheelock 1997) and like some homeworkers, see an advantage in more autonomy and flexibility (Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995; Felstead and Jewson 1996; Salmi 1996; Marlow 1997; Sullivan and Lewis 2001). Yet in the previous chapters we have seen that the numbers they can take on are restricted by the Children Act 1989 and its implementation by Social Services or by the *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*, its *Ausführungsgesetz* by the *Land* and its interpretation by the *Jugendamt*. The hours childminders and *Tagesmütter* work are determined by the needs of parents, the needs of her own family or whether the needs of her family are perceived to be fulfilled whilst looking after other people's children. This chapter will look at the daily work of childminders and *Tagesmütter* within these constraints. It will explore what form this work takes and attempt to disentangle the influences that determine the decisions about family day care providers' daily arrangements. Where the work takes place – in the home of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* – should not distract from a conceptualisation of her daily routine as her work routine. Her job is to look after other children than her own and she is paid to do so. Yet at the same time childminders and *Tagesmütter* do not cease to be mothers and – working at home – housework tasks may lurk in every corner as they go through the day.

As we have seen, to scrutinise women's roles of mother and housewife at the same time is very difficult. An emphasis on one role seems to push the other one into the background.

An emphasis on the role of housewife and on housework tasks involves the risk of entering the route of commodifying care, rendering much of the caring and self-fulfilling activities invisible (Himmelweit 1995). When, on the other hand, the role of a mother and childcare tasks are emphasised the danger emerges of accounting for women's care in a way that offers a justification for the gendered division of domestic activities. It includes the risk of moving too close towards biological explanations. This dilemma becomes extremely visible when the third role, that of a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* is introduced, caring for other people's children. On the one hand becoming self-employed, being registered, having a contract and being paid for this service positions family day care firmly in the world of work. On the other hand it is these women's experience and role as mothers that qualifies them to undertake this kind of work (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 3). That the care takes place in a (private) family home is seen as the advantage over other (public) childcare institutions, like day nurseries. Three quarters of the childminders returning the English questionnaire described themselves as 'childcare professionals'. Yet, this statement had no correlation to whether these women had any formal childcare training or whether they had attended a pre-registration course for childminders. Of the women in Germany over half of the respondents had formal childcare training. Then again, during the interviews some women explained what they were doing with likening their work to mothering.

> I think it [the child] wants a replacement mum. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

> You did what you did with your own children. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

> You've got to treat the child as if it was your own child. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

> In principle [you have to] treat everybody [own and minded children] the same – concerning justice. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

Does that justify viewing the work of a family day care provider as tucking a few more children under one's motherly wing, improving family managing skills and just keep on doing what one was doing before – running a family home? Not quite. The work

description of caring for other people's children forwarded by family day care providers borrows the image of the intimate relationship between mother and child. Clearly the paid work of a family day care provider contains emotional elements and here family day care providers emphasise relational aspects. It is the emotional relationship aspect of care that renders this activity inseparable from the person doing it (Himmelweit 1995) and that makes care unlike paid work which is motivated by monetary interests (Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). For the examination of family day care contrasting care and work in this way leads into an analytical cul-de-sac. It invites speculation about the quality of relationship between carer and children in the light of money changing hands between carer and parents. Yet this does not inform us about what childminders and *Tagesmütter* actually do with or for children in their care, or in other words their work.

Bubeck's (1995) definition of care offers a way out. She stays clear from the inevitable emotional involvement of the carer and but focuses on the person benefiting from care. Care is defined as an activity meeting needs the recipient cannot meet by herself. It allows us to examine family day care, on the one hand, as care for other people's children and, on the other hand, as a service performed for parents who took the decision to got out to work with the consequence of not being available to look after their children by themselves. Additionally the differences between care and housework seem less salient. By defining care as performed for someone who is not able to do so by herself it becomes obvious that caring has elements of (house-) work. Yet the greatest benefit stems from the fact that it eliminates a particular problem of analysing family day care. In order to illustrate the problem let us look at the housework activity vacuum cleaning and the childcare activity reading books to children. Neither activity can be undertaken selectively if geared towards different recipients, assuming that own and minded children listen to the reading. Both may or may not be enjoyed by the woman performing it. The problem is that one single activity of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* may be seen either as work, for which she is paid or it may be seen as care for her own children or family, for which she does not receive payment. The carpet may be cleaned because of the family day care provider's housework standards, her childcare standards or because she feels the parents of the minded child expect a crumb free floor etc. The motivation for reading aloud can be rooted in an understanding that children's development benefits from it, or in parents' expectation that family day care includes introducing young children to

literature. The crucial point is that neither vacuum cleaning nor reading aloud, can be performed by very young children. Both activities can be seen as caring for children.

Now it becomes possible to differentiate between the care of children, the daily activities performed by childminders and *Tagesmütter* for or with the children in her care and the service expected by parents. What childminders and *Tagesmütter* perceive as good childcare may differ from or conflict with the services they think parents expect. The interpretation by the family day care provider of these two sides of the coin, care for children and service for parents, will determine her daily activities and the relationship with children and with parents. This chapter focuses on the care provided for all children. The account of childminders and *Tagesmütter* on their diary sheets and during the interviews sometimes made it difficult to differentiate between the minded and the family day care provider's own children. This appears to confirm that the daily practice can be viewed as the necessary care provided for someone who is not able to do so by herself. The following section examines the daily work of childminders and *Tagesmütter* as they care for children and the routines or rhythms that emerge.

Routines

The questionnaires in England and in Germany provided family day care providers with a diary sheet. It offered a time grid and asked childminders and *Tagesmütter* to recall their last working day and to note down all household and childminding activities and commitments, for example when children arrived, school runs, meals, parent-and-toddler groups, hanging the washing out, tidying, talking to parents etc. The description forwarded on these diary sheets and the interviews showed that childminders and *Tagesmütter* develop routines. In England 139 (68 per cent of the 205 respondents) women filled in the sheet attached to the questionnaire and all of the 20 German respondents provided information about their working day in the questionnaire. Most of the women had developed daily routines and weekly routines. Others described what they called routines but were rather a set of rules. They were based on what childminders and *Tagesmütter* believe they should be doing in order to provide suitable care for children and satisfactory services for parents, and what they feel they have to provide for their own family during their working hours. Routines evolve around children's needs as perceived by childminders and *Tagesmütter* and by parents. (How these two sets of perceptions are

mediated will be looked at in the next chapter.) First let us have a look at the daily routines of childminders and then at the routines of *Tagesmütter* in turn.

The work routine of a childminder

Like the housewives in Ann Oakley's research (1974) childminders are their own boss and free from supervision. In contrast, they are not free to choose their tasks. The study of housewives emphasised the work, housework. Children were, from this perspective, on the one hand the creators of additional work, since "they are neither tidy nor clean in their 'natural' state" and the timing of their demands interrupts the smooth flow of household routines performed by the houseworker (Oakley 1974a, p. 102). Standards and routines revolved around husbands and children (e.g. meals need to be cooked at certain times) but were invented and developed by the housewives. Standards and routines were passed on from mothers to daughters or developed by housewives in rebellion to their (untidy) mothers (Oakley 1974a).

This chapter looks at the daily routines as they develop from looking after other people's children in the context of the family day care provider's commitments arising from her role as housewife and as mother. The emphasis lies on their task of working as family day care provider.

Table 6.1 provides an overview of the collation of childminders' diary sheets[2]. The first children arrive around eight a.m. Some children eat breakfast others watch television or play. The childminder washes the dishes, engages in some other housework until it is time to get herself and the children ready for the school run. Children are delivered to schools, nurseries and playgroups. Some childminders return home to provide breakfast or a snack. Then they do some housework while children play or watch television. They play with children, change nappies and feed babies. Other childminders attend parent-and-toddler groups, childminder drop-ins or soft-play. These children's activities are usually structured around a coffee break. Others go shopping. Around 11 a.m. it is time to set off for the nursery or playgroup run. When childminders arrive back home it is time to read a story or to engage in other activities like drawing, play-dough, etc. until the childminder has to prepare the lunch. After lunch some children sleep or watch television/videos. Then the childminder washes the dishes, prepares family meals, does some housework or has a break. Around one p.m. some children have to be taken to nursery or playgroup. Until it is time to set off for the last school run about three p.m., childminders play, read

or sing with children. When the childminder arrives back home she provides children with an afternoon snack. Then children watch television or play until they are collected at around five p.m.

Table 6.1: A typical working day of a childminder

8 a.m.	Minded children arrive Breakfast, television, play School, nursery and playgroup run	
9 a.m.	Breakfast or snack Play or watch television Nappy changing etc.	Parent-and-toddler groups, childminder drop-ins or soft-play Shopping
11 a.m.	Nursery or playgroup run Reading a story or activities like drawing, play-dough, etc. Preparing lunch	
Noon	Lunch Changing nappies etc. Nap Housework and break	
1 p.m.	Nap Play, television Housework	Nursery and playgroup run
2 p.m.	Play Changing nappies etc.	
3 p.m.	School, nursery and playgroup run	
3.30 p.m.	Snack Watch television; play in the garden or inside. Talk to parents	
5 p.m.	Most children are collected	

Childminders' description often did not differentiate between their own children and the children in their care. Obviously children arriving or being collected at the childminders were not her own. Many women pointed out whether they provided meals for the minded children, her own family or both together. The greatest difficulties in distinguishing

between the working tasks and the family tasks of childminders were encountered concerning school and nursery runs.

The overriding determinant of the childminder's routine is that individual children have to be in particular places at particular times and that children have to be taken there. Childminders have to tailor their routines to fit the complicated, and fragmented framework of Early Years Provision by the public and the voluntary sector prevailing in Britain (see e.g. Moss and Melhuish 1991; Meltzer 1994; Moss and Penn 1996; Mooney and Munton 1997). The diary sheets provided by the childminders showed that a wide range of the age of children contributes to a complicated mesh of commitments.

The work routine of a *Tagesmutter*

Compared to the daily routine of a childminder the routine of *Tagesmutter* (Table 6.2) is less fragmented and emerged as more consistent across the sample of the 20 women returning the questionnaire and the 3 women who were interviewed but did not return the questionnaire[3]. Around seven a.m. children arrive and are settled in. *Tagesmütter* send their own children to school. Children in Germany are usually not taken to school[4]. At eight a.m. *Tagesmütter* have breakfast with the children in their care, which is followed by washing hands and faces, changing nappies, potty etc. After nine in the morning *Tagesmütter* and children set off to the playground, to walk in the forest or to other activities outside. When the weather is bad *Tagesmütter* offer activities inside, like painting, reading or singing. Only a few *Tagesmütter* take children to gymnastics, dancing or attend the German equivalent of parent-and-toddler groups. Around 11 a.m. *Tagesmütter* cook lunch while children play. After lunch children are washed, nappies changed, potty etc. Between noon and approximately two p.m. children rest in beds. After a story or a song they go to sleep. *Tagesmütter* use this time to wash the dishes, prepare afternoon snacks, engage in some housework and have a break. Mothers of school-aged children prepare their lunch and join them. Then they help their own children with homework. After the younger children wake up they all join together for 'coffee', a drink and cake, biscuits, fruit or yoghurt. This is followed by playing outside in the back yard, garden or a playground close at hand from where children are collected.

Table 6.2: A typical working day of a *Tagesmutter*

7 a.m.	Children arrive Own children are sent to school
8 a.m.	Joint breakfast Changing nappies, potty, toilet
9.30 – 11 a.m.	Playing outside weather permitting Or activities inside, like painting, reading, or singing Some *Tagesmütter* take their children to children's activities
11 a.m.	*Tagesmutter* cooks lunch while children play
11.45	Lunch Washing, nappies, potty, toilet
Noon – 2 p.m.	Children rest in beds Housework Break
2 p.m.	'Coffee' (Drink and cake, biscuits, fruit or yoghurt) Washing, nappies, potty, toilet
3 p.m.	Playing

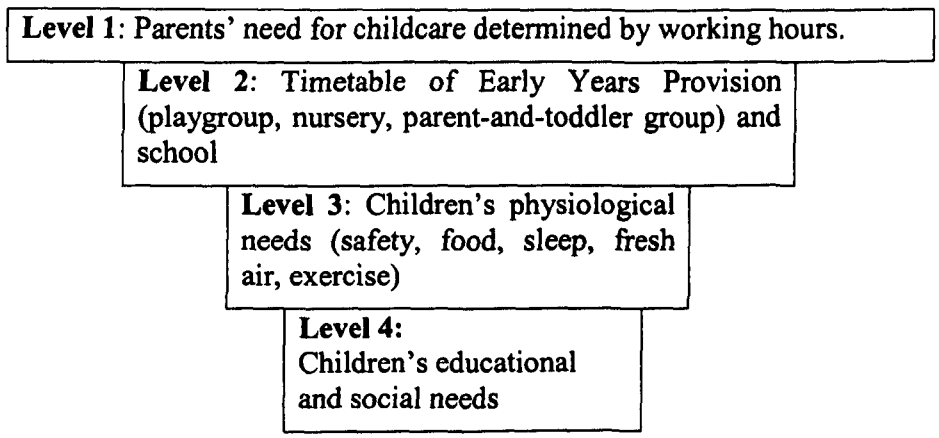
When two *Tagesmütter* work jointly together a major difference is the opportunity to divide some tasks. For example, when children are resting one *Tagesmutter* sits with these children while the other one washes the dishes, tidies up and prepares for the afternoon[5].

The hierarchy determining work routines

The comparison of work routines of childminders and *Tagesmütter* shows different hierarchies of daily routines. The following model will be used to explain the differences and it can be used to clarify cross-national comparison (Figure 6.1). On Level one are the determinants that cannot (or only in extreme circumstances) be altered by the childminder or the *Tagesmutter*. These are the time parents need childcare and, when children have reached compulsory school age, school hours. Any higher level has to fit into the pattern developed in the previous level. Level two contains determinants arising out of Early Years Provision, which are seen to be beneficial for children and should be attended on a regular base, but are not compulsory. Level three is what Maslow labelled as physiological needs, the basic level in the hierarchy of needs, but may also be connected

to Maslow's next level, safety needs. Level four addresses needs higher up in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly 'love and belongingness' and 'cognitive needs' (Maslow 1970).

Figure 6.1: The hierarchy of determinants of work routines

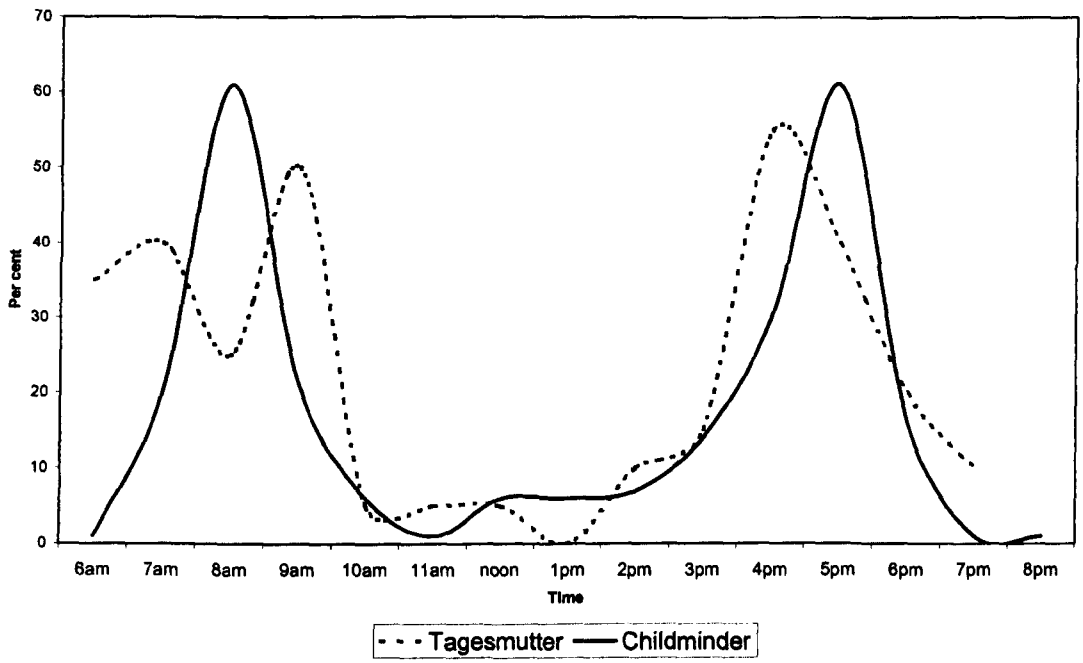


For both the childminder and the *Tagesmutter* parents' need for childcare at a certain time are the most compelling determinants (Level one). It means they have to be in a certain place at a certain time. Usually that is the home. However, some children are collected from school or delivered to the parental home of the family day care provider. In Germany some *Tagesmütter* prefer to visit a playground or stay in the backyard or garden when parents come to collect their children. Here the purpose is that parents do not have to climb the stairs up to the flat and that parents do not stay on for longer than necessary. Other determinants on Level one are compulsory school hours. In the English case requirements arising out of the registration have to be included since they prescribe which space can be used for family day care.

Figure 6.2 shows the differences of Level one commitments for the women in the two countries. The first children in Germany arrived earlier, but also over a longer period of time compared to the children in England. *Tagesmütter* can plan around a clear division between the morning when children arrive and the later afternoon when children are collected. Childminders encounter a period in the middle of the day where pre-school children may be collected but the school children have not yet arrived. In general the main collecting time of children is an hour later in England compared to the German sample. This may reflect that German working hours start an hour earlier (for example

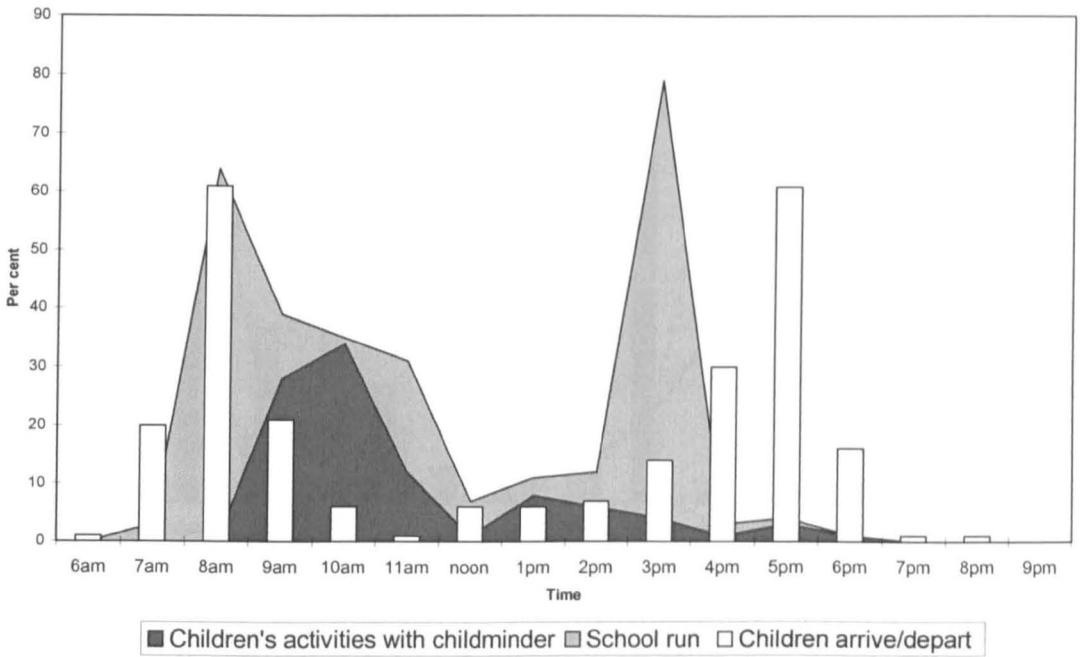
school starts at 8 a.m.) and that on average weekly and daily working hours are shorter (European Commission 2000)

Figure 6.2: Children arriving at or leaving the family day care provider



For the English childminder the next level, Level two, are the opening hours of other childcare and educational provision. Parent-and-toddler groups, playgroups, nursery and reception classes are seen as valuable for children by childminders and parents alike. Here children are seen to learn to share and communicate with other children and they can take advantage of toys not available at the childminder's or at home. Figure 6.3 shows the additional necessity to be in or to move to a certain place at a certain time for childminders. The area 'school runs' include also nursery or playgroup runs – activities for children that do not demand the presence of the childminder. The area 'children's activities' includes parents-and-toddler groups and, for example, soft-play – activities for children where the childminder has to be present and which have to be attended at fixed times.

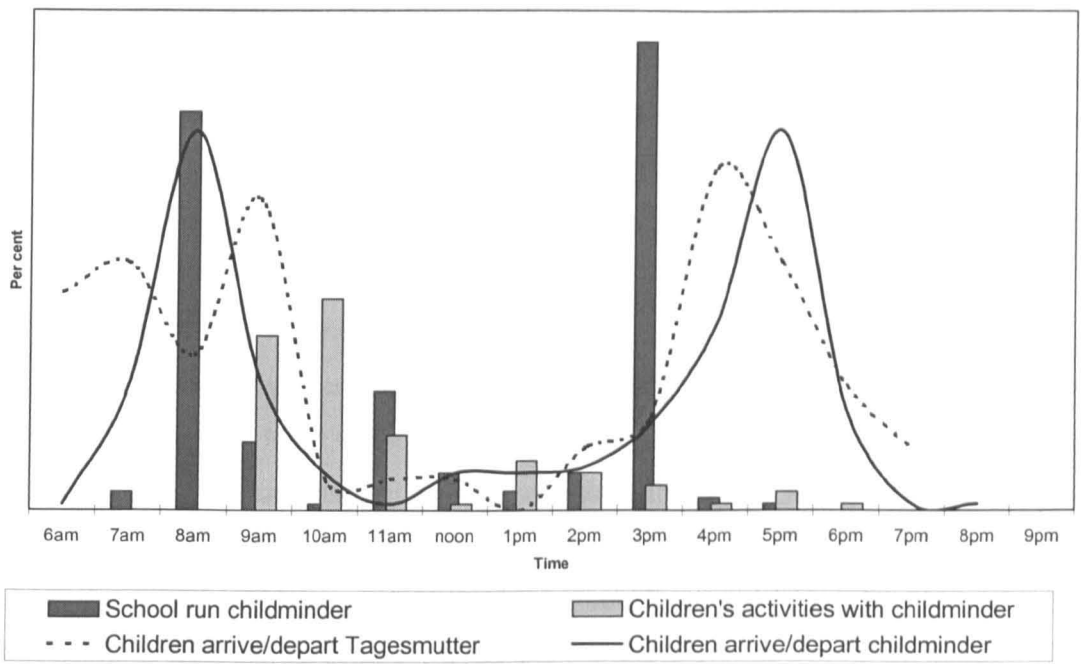
Figure 6.3: Level one and two determinants of routines in England



The most striking difference between the daily routine of a childminder and the daily routine of a *Tagesmutter* is the absence of Level two as a determinant for German routines. None of the respondents filling in the questionnaire looked after school children. However, children in Germany start school when they are six and then they are perceived as being able to walk to and from school without adult supervision. Therefore none of the respondents took her own children to school or had to meet them at the school gate.

In general children of the age of three are seen as ready for kindergarten. Then they may have outgrown the care of a *Tagesmutter*. Monika and Almut both reported suggesting to parents they should enrol children in kindergarten and showed a strong view that children at least the last year before compulsory school age ought to attend a kindergarten. Early years provision is less fragmented and better suited to meet parents need to cover working hours (see Chapter 3). During the German interviews three *Tagesmütter* mentioned that they take children in their care to gymnastics or dancing classes. These activities did not turn up on the diary sheets, and are visited much less frequently than similar provisions for children in England. As a result the German routine appears to be less fragmented, calmer and more orientated to children's needs situated on Level three and four. Figure 6.4 is based on determinants of routines in England (Figure 6.3) and includes Level 1 determinants of work routines in Germany.

Figure 6.4: Level one and two determinants of routines compared



Other needs of children are subordinate in so far as the response to them is tailored so that commitments on Level two can be met. For example, during one of the interviews one of the children became weepy and obviously very tired. Yet the girl was not put to bed or into the buggy for a nap. Alison explained:

> She would be having a nap. But unfortunately this week, the way that things are going – I've got to pick up Robin at half past 12. So, if I put her for a nap now I am going to have to lift her straight back up, which is just going to upset her anyway. What I do is try and keep her reasonably happy. And then she'll probably nod off in the car. And she'll probably be all right for that little journey. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Thus in the English care situation, fragmented work routines arising out of Level two impinge on Level three. Level three concerns the physiological needs of children. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* have to keep children safe, fed and able to rest. These requirements have a direct impact on the daily routine. Later on in this chapter these three 'needs' are looked at in more detail. With it can be demonstrated how the hierarchy of routines works.

The last level, Level four, relates to the educational and social needs of children as they are met in day-to-day life. It is about what family day care providers actually do with children in their care, how they relate to children and how they perceive their role childminder or *Tagesmutter*. As the last level it will be discussed as a separate section. Before Level three and Level four are scrutinised it is useful to look at the benefits of routines as childminders and *Tagesmütter* perceive it.

Why routines

When routines are not prescribed by circumstances beyond the control of the childminder or the *Tagesmutter* it is up to the woman how and to which extent to structure the day. Housework may be organised following certain routines and standards. These can be conceptualised as a yardstick that allows to gratify oneself (Oakley 1974a). Mothers gained the feeling of being in control and some time and space for themselves by establishing routines or rhythms of the day (Boulton 1983).

Tagesmütter, who previously have been working in a day centre may use familiar structures to organise their day. Daycentres in the GDR had a particularly narrowly prescribed structure of activities nation-wide. It was argued that children were in need of this structure and that scientists had worked out what is best for children. It was the duty of the childcare workers to implement the findings of scientists for the welfare of the children[6]. After Almut had described her daily routine she was asked how that had developed.

> In principle, once you have been *Erzieherin* [here Almut refers to her work in the daycentre] you have got it in you. And you don't forget it. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

The argument of children's need for routine – perhaps better called rhythm – is considerably stronger in Germany. It was an issue in textbooks for childcare workers and parents e.g. (Beu et al. 1971; Neubert 1967; Bachmann et al. 1986). The physical and emotional development process of children demanded structure and learning was supported by routines. A more recent book written for *Tagesmütter* and parents also refers to the benefits of the establishment of a daily routine (Kurth 1997). *Tagesmütter* agreed that a daily repeated routine allowed children to 'get their bearings' and gave children the sense of security. Some English childminders echoed this analysis.

> Children like routine and they like discipline. ... They don't like not knowing where they stand. They like to know that that's what they going to do. They know, there is time for play; there is time for eating. They know every time they go to the toilet they wash their hands. After they've had their meal, I usually take them back to the toilet again. And then they have their sleep. They know when they'll wake up from their sleep they will go for the big ones. So they know. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Introducing routines and rules provides family day care providers and children alike with some sense of security. Adults and children know what is going to happen. Additionally, the responsible adult does not have to go through continuous decision-making processes over what to do next. Yet routines and rules are also affected by determinants situated on Level one and two, and ideally supplement existing patterns. Physical needs of children are situated on Level three. Let us have a closer look at how safety, nutrition of children and children's rest fit into the hierarchy of work routine determinants of childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

Safety

The difference between the German and the British legal framework is the prominence of physical safety issues for children in the Children Act 1989 compared to the *KJHG* (see also Appendix 3). A concern that children in the care of a childminder may come to harm, either due to accidents or due to abuse by other adults informs requirements of registration which affect the daily routines. This means that another set of determinants at Level one are in place. In practice safety issues are dealt with at the initial and the following inspections and are fixed in the registration report. Restrictions on the space used – compulsory or chosen by the family day care provider – impact on, for example, what activities are offered to the children in her care, in what activities the childminder or the *Tagesmutter* can engage and how she can combine her childcare work with her other commitments.

In England the inspecting Officer from Social Services declares the space childminding takes place as safe and suitable for children, excluding other 'unsafe' space. Particularly

stairs within the house or flat, fireplaces and the kitchen in general are seen as dangerous. Some local authorities do not allow minded children in any of the upstairs rooms. In connection with the childminder's task to keep an eye on the minded children at all times her daily routine has to take place in these childproof rooms.

The concern with children's vulnerability to abuse is reflected in that childminders are supposed to be with the child at all times. By default this excludes other members of the household or visitors being left alone with the minded child. If the husband of the childminder or her adult children wish to be available for support or emergency care they have to be registered as assistant or as childminder.

Tagesmütter in Germany do not have to submit their house or flat to a thorough scrutiny by an officer of the *Jugendamt*. Although they may receive advice on how to improve safety, looking after other people's children is not restricted to certain parts of the house or the flat by the *Jugendamt*. This means that safety issues in Germany as determinates of daily routines are situated on Level 3. *Tagesmütter* make safety choices themselves.

When *Tagesmütter* decide to set a room aside for family day care and to keep minded children out of certain rooms or spaces they are guided by the wish to preserve some privacy or to spare the (new) furniture. Three of the questionnaire respondents had set aside a room for childminding and two used a self-contained 'granny' flat. In the latter case children hardly enter the private rooms of the *Tagesmutter* and her family. Since it is more common in Germany to live in flats the danger of stairs within the living space does not exist. Also hardly any household has a fireplace or uses it on a regular basis.

The exact place where children are looked after constitutes conditions that channels the care on offer either closer to care provided in families by parents or closer to care provided in day centres. Children may be looked after in a house or flat that is designed for adults and hardly altered or the space accommodates features reflecting children's physical abilities and interests. The first invites learning experiences based on 'real' life situations. The latter provides an environment easy to handle for children and freeing up time to engage in set-up experiences. The first position is reflected in the opinion that, for example, ornaments in the living room (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years) or soap and shampoo in the bathroom (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years) should not be removed, the latter by the installation of children's toilets and sinks lowered to

child's height (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years). There are women who try to find a compromise. It may take this form:

> All you do is you build your environment. And make it as easy as possible. I mean, every room in this house is childproofed. So I know that these children can wander round the house without me behind them and not getting into any danger. ... I like them to have a little bit of an exploring there, on the drawer with the tea towels in, you know. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Further implications of the decision which space is used for looking after other people's children are the effect it has on other family members. This will be looked at in Chapter 8.

Food

Food and drink are basic physiological needs. Providing food for children or others is connected to care and affection and is used to express relationships (Douglas 1975; Beardsworth and Keil 1997). Childminders and *Tagesmütter* seem to agree that children need feeding at regular times. Adults are in control over what food to offer to children and are responsible for a healthy diet. It is widely accepted that a well balanced diet is essential to let children grow up healthy. What constitutes a healthy diet for children may be controversial, influenced by personal preferences, cultural and religious norms and financial means (Charles and Kerr 1988; DeVault 1991). The adult food provider may be able to control and measure what children can eat and drink but cannot force children to do so. With that food consumption as a daily practice (within families) becomes a process where children actively can contest adult authority (Grieshaber 1997). When Alison started to work as a childminder feeding times with very small children turned out to be "most difficult", however, after a while "they seem to have slotted in" (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years). Children want to be fed instantly and demand the attention of the carer. Apart from offering nutrition and affection norms and values are attached to mealtimes and may constitute an important part of children's socialisation.

Meal times have to be coordinated with parents' wishes and their own routines. Yet meals or snacks at the family day care provider continue to be on Level three of the hierarchy of determinants of work routines because parental wishes have to be accommodated within the structures of Level one and two. Family day care providers may find themselves in a situation where a decision has to be made whether it is more important to satisfy the child's hunger, or whether the joint meal at the parents' home takes priority. Ruth describes the awkward situation when her own child is very hungry and she offers him a biscuit to keep going until the next meal. Of course the minded child demands a biscuit, too. However, Ruth feels that the child's mother may disagree because she wants to take a child home who has appetite for a family meal. In contrast to Alison's concerns Deborah explains that one of the children in her care is fed in the afternoon. This, according to Deborah, renders another (cooked) meal provided by the parents in the evening superfluous from a nutritional perspective. The joint family meal has another purpose, "probably just to keep the family together at tea time, you know. She [the minded girl] has something little then." (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years).

Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6 show meal and feeding times of all the persons present in the household of the childminder or the *Tagesmutter*[7]. The peak of breakfast at around eight o'clock in England is the mealtime of the childminder's family. The German breakfast peak shows the joint breakfast of the *Tagesmutter* and the children in her care. The dip of German meals or snacks at 10 a.m. represents the time spent outside, whilst the English counterparts may have their 'elevenses' at this time. The wider spread of lunch in Germany has two reasons. One is that younger children often sleep before they eat their lunch and that (own) school children return home at flexible times, which affects the time of the meal. Three p.m. is the traditional time in Germany to have a cup of coffee and a piece of cake, as seven p.m. is the traditional time for a cold evening meal. In contrast to the German practice four p.m. is the time most school children receive their main meal (called tea) in the Northeast of England.

Figure 6.5: England: preparing food and eating meals

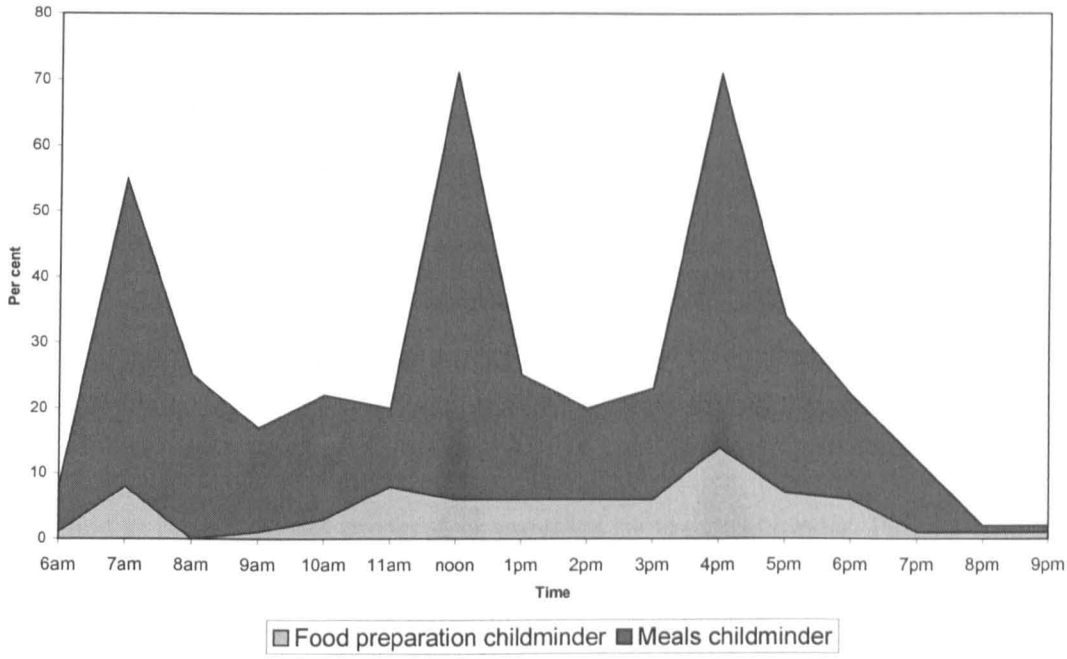
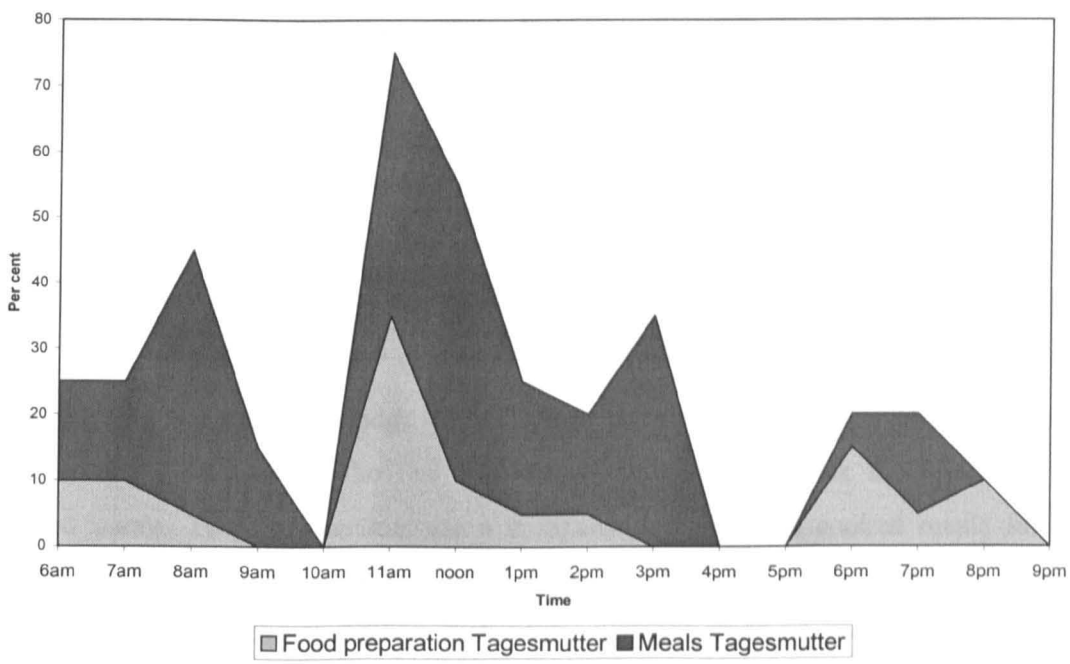


Figure 6.6: Germany: Preparing food and eating meals



Another difference between the practices at childminders and *Tagesmütter* is what children eat. The English women mentioned – often in passing – that the children in their care eat spaghetti hoops, sausage rolls, crisps and sandwiches. Fruit or meals cooked with

fresh ingredients were hardly mentioned. Ruth is an exception and explained that she prefers to feed children healthy snacks, like fruit and raisins, however that parents ask her to provide biscuits. Ruth feels she has to comply with parents' wishes. This has to be seen against the background of an extensive market of ready-made food geared towards children, a widely practised separation of adult and children's meals, and safety concerns.

> I would never make, for example, a cooked dinner. I would cook a dinner in advance and freeze it and microwave it. But I wouldn't go out, for example, and put a chip-pan on or anything like that, because I would not risk it for a second. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Baby food is in general not prepared or provided by the childminder. Parents tend to be responsible for supplying baby food. Sometimes these arrangements continue and older children bring their own meals.

German *Tagesmütter* emphasised that they offer a well-balanced diet. Here is Ursula's explanation why she thinks of increasing the food money.

> I only buy good things. I don't want to buy any cheap juice, or something. Fruit and yoghurt every day, and muesli. There is always everything there. ... I do not buy any kind of meat. We do not like to eat pork. We prefer turkey. And that is slightly more expensive. However, the parents agree. One of the mothers wants everything fresh. I do not cook any instant foods or use tins. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

This attitude and the knowledge shown about nutrition seem to be shared by most *Tagesmütter*. The women who feel that they do not wish to cook the lunch refer to ordered meals. Two *Tagesmütter* use a company that provides cooked meals for day centres. Another one receives meals from the German Red Cross, who also provide 'meals on wheels'. When *Tagesmütter* cook, younger children are banned from the kitchen. They sit in the hall in front of the kitchen door and talk to the *Tagesmutter*. Older children may sit at the kitchen table and draw or engage in similar activities.

The meals times themselves seem to be differently organised. To sit down at a set table for meals and use this time for communication was an issue that was much more strongly

emphasised by *Tagesmütter*. The importance of a meal included preparations in which children can participate and offers the opportunity to talk about the past day or future activities. At the same time meals are seen as an opportunity to contribute to a successful socialisation of children. Consequently *Tagesmütter* appear to be more likely to have a joint meal with the children in their care compared with childminders[8].

> It is important to me that children are introduced to certain norms. [For example] that you have breakfast together and that [I] do not hold the sandwich out to the child to let her take a bite of – but that you sit at the table, that you wash yourself before and after you eat. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

The English childminders did not talk about the learning opportunities of meals. Looking at the routines of childminders, tied between bringing and collecting times, school and nursery runs it would be difficult to find the necessary time to create the relaxed atmosphere needed for this purpose. Another strain on the timetable arises from that most children in the care of childminders are booked part-time (70 per cent of children were in the care of the childminder for up to 20 hours a week).

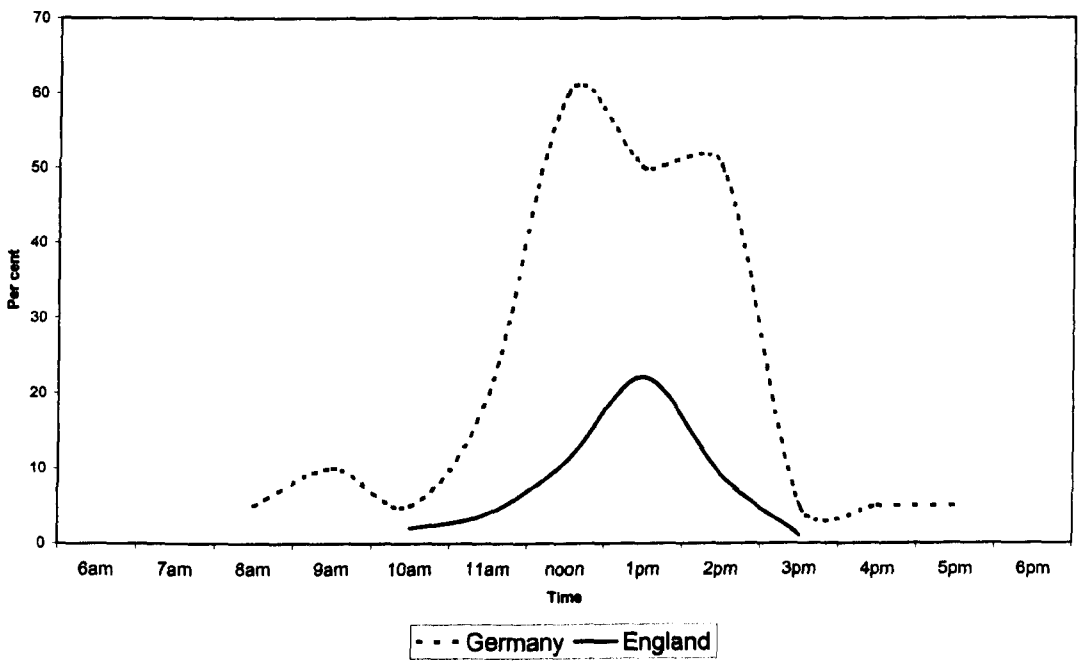
Sleep

Sleep is, like food, a basic physiological need of human beings. In children this need takes a different form compared to adults and changes over time, particularly radically during the first year of their lives. Very young infants fall asleep almost anywhere when they are tired (for example, Leach 1997). However, this ability vanishes over time. One of the central pre-occupations of parents is to teach children to sleep at night (Health Education Authority 1998) and all childcare manuals offer advice to parents how to achieve this (Leach 1979; Mackonochie 1996)[9]. Admittedly this is rather in the interest of the adults and the sleeping patterns parents attempt to establish suit their own needs of sleep, their commitments and their preferences.

The amount of sleep children need and at what time of the day children are tired vary according to age and individual pre-conditions, established structures at home and so on. How childminders and *Tagesmütter* perceive and deal with the need to sleep varies substantially between the two countries. The differences of children reported napping

(Figure 6.7) is striking and needs explanation, since it seems unlikely that in general English children need less sleep than German children. There are fewer childminders than *Tagesmütter* where children sleep at any point during their working day, and when English children sleep they appear to sleep for a shorter period of time.

Figure 6.7: Children rest or sleep



One reason for the difference is that the age range of children looked after by childminders is much wider than the age range of children looked after by *Tagesmütter.* According to the survey children were looked after by a childminder up to the age of 12 in contrast to Germany, where the oldest child looked after by a *Tagesmutter* was 4 years old. Accordingly the mean age of children cared for by childminders was 4.2 years compared to the mean age of 1.8 years at *Tagesmütter* in Germany. The diary sheet, on which the graph of sleeping times is based, did not (by default) differentiate between minded and own children. Therefore, in order to understand the difference, the age composition of children in households of childminders and *Tagesmütter*, including own and minded children is relevant. Fifty-four per cent of the 163 active childminders had at least one child under the age of three to look after including their own. In comparison 95 per cent of the 20 *Tagesmütter* were in this position.

The absence of determinants of working routines situated at Level two in the case of *Tagesmütter* offers another part of the explanation. Childminders have to be at playgroups, nurseries or at the school gate at certain times and they have to take the children in their care with them in order to fulfil their obligation of proper supervision. Often the time schedule is so tight that it would not allow lying children down for a longer period of time. It is quite likely that children fall asleep in the pushchair or in the car on the way. However, this was not explicitly noted down on the dairy sheet by the childminders. On the diary sheets of the *Tagesmütter* the after-lunch sleep or after-lunch rest takes a central position[10]. Obviously the absence of Level two of determinants of the work routine (school runs or similar) in Germany is a pre-condition. Yet the descriptions and explanations of their practices forwarded by the interviewees show that the differences between the approach by childminders and *Tagesmütter* are more extensive.

Tagesmütter are convinced of the necessity and the benefits of an after-lunch rest.

> If you know a bit about psychology, then you know that a child needs to switch off, that she needs this break for her body [and] for her development. ... My Xaver ... this lad really loves to go to bed. At midday he is looking forward to it. Next week he is going to be two [years old]. Well, that would be the worst I could do to him if I would not lay him down." (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

The necessary break for mind and body can best be achieved by providing a proper bed or mattress for children with bedclothes and a bed-time routine that allows children to unwind and relax.

> Then [after lunch] they undress and go to bed – after they have been to toilet and so on, of course. Then we sing a little song. They can decide whether I sing or whether we sing together or whether I read a little story. I am in the fortunate position that all three of them fall asleep quickly and all of them sleep in the same room. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

Only very young children do not sleep in a 'proper' bed. They may sleep in a pram, which has the advantage that they can sleep outside in fresh air[11]. To safeguard that

children can sleep as long as they need to may involve letting the individual children sleep in different rooms. Further confirmation of the power this has in organising the day of the adult in charge comes from Inge. Her one-year-old daughter had just changed from sleeping twice a day to once a day. Inge felt quite relieved because now she is less tied to the house. Despite the awkwardness of the previous sleeping patterns of her daughter Inge did not try to encourage a change but waited until the child altered her sleeping patterns of her own account.

English childminders mentioned the sleep of the children in their care rather in passing. When children sleep, they may sleep in the pushchair, or fall asleep on the sofa. Childminder's possibilities to offer places to sleep are limited by the restriction of rooms declared as fit for childminding during the registration process. When childminders talked about sleeping children they tended to refer to the opportunity sleeping children offer. A sleeping toddler allows older children to take out toys with small parts, which seems to be too dangerous when younger children are around, or older children watch a video geared towards their age group. Women may have the chance to sit down for a little while or get on with their housework. Certainly, the *Tagesmütter* appreciate these opportunities, too. Nevertheless, the German emphasis on children's need to sleep renders these chances rather as a by-product.

Education and socialising

The last level of determinants of the daily work routine is that of children's perceived need to be educated and to socialise. It is the level that shows the largest differences between childminders and *Tagesmütter*, but also within each national sample. The differences arise from the concepts of childhood as reflected in childcare policies and provision for children and carers and from the understanding of children's needs held by individual childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

Childminders clearly identified with the important task of turning children into independent, responsible, older children as a stepping-stone to become adults.

> You get to one of the milestones, the cutting of teeth, the potty training, the walking. And we [the childminders] have to do all of these, you know, teach them to walk and things like that. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

Childminders were proud of the amount of stimulation they offered to or organised for the children in their care. Apart from regular visits to parent-and-toddler groups or similar, these childminders invest money in audio and videotapes, which promise stimulation beyond their own abilities. One childminder went so far to produce flash cards for the two-year-old girl in her care and taught her how to read. However, the interviewed childminders tended to connect education and socialising amongst children to activities outside the childminder's home. All but one of the interviewed childminders visited parent-and-toddler or childminder groups, etc. regularly[12] in order to 'stimulate' children.

> We [childminders] would rather be out and stimulating the children than in the house. I like to be out. I like to try to be out half the day if I can. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Alison seems to imply that it is not possible, or perhaps that it is more difficult to stimulate children at home. This problem is picked up by another childminder:

> [Attending parent-and-toddler groups] means the childminder is certainly not stuck in the house on her own. And the child, the children all get bored. I think if they were left in the house all the time, and not only that, but you can't possibly have the toys in your house that they have at toddlers. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

A third reason to attend parent-and-toddler groups is that they offer opportunities for children to socialise with other children. It helps children learning to share and acquiring social skills.

> They [parent-and-toddler groups] got them out. They got them mixing, you know. Then they mix when they are older, aren't they? (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

In contrast to the childminders *Tagesmütter* felt responsible for the education of the children in their care without relying on out-side help. However, they did not come up with any sort of curriculum. They appeared to see children as little people, who if provided with the right environment would thrive. One condition for children to develop was to cater for their physical needs. When toys and materials were present – and if required, support by the *Tagesmutter* – their curiosity would guide them to make new

experiences and acquire new skills. Particularly very young children had many opportunities to learn by participating in day-to-day activities like getting undressed and dressed, eating, preparing the table etc. From this perspective it is the task of a *Tagesmutter* to create a relaxed and happy atmosphere.

> When you meet them with a smile then the children are cheerful immediately. They are laughing here a lot. We laugh a lot here, all together. We always have a lot of fun, so that it is really enjoyable. Then the whole life turns out to be relaxed here. (Karin, worked as a Tagesmutter 20 years)

Tagesmütter had no access to a group solely accessible to *Tagesmütter* and the children in their care. Also there are far fewer groups established that reassemble parent-and-toddler groups. Overall the interviewed *Tagesmütter* appear to be less enthusiastic visiting these groups. The *Tagesmütter* making use of parent-and-toddler groups brought up the social aspects for children.

> That the children get out into another environment. Meet more children. There they learn to settle conflicts, naturally. That is important. We see it as an advantage. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Of those visiting parent-and-toddler groups none mentioned toys or activities available as a reason to go there. However, in the descriptions of their daily routine at home, activities like painting, use of play-dough, junk model-building, reading and singing were stated frequently. Another reason why *Tagesmütter* are less enthusiastic about parent-and-toddler groups may be that their function, as defined by English childminders, is largely covered by the German daily trips to the playground. It combines children's perceived need to spend time in fresh air with the access to suitable out-door toys and the opportunity to meet other children. The advantage over organised group meetings can be seen in its informal nature only depending on the weather and/or suitable clothes. Most interviewed *Tagesmütter* planned a daily trip to the playground[13].

The educational needs of somewhat older children were perceived as better catered for in a kindergarten. Although *Tagesmütter* with childcare training clearly feel able to provide activities appropriate for older children, *Tagesmütter* believed that the small number of

young children in their care did not meet the need to cope in a larger group or to settle conflicts and develop assertiveness.

> I think that when [Jana] is going to be four –she is robust and tall, and strong and healthy – that she should starts kindergarten next year. So that she can be prepared for school. It is different here, where she is with the little ones, always. She always is the oldest and the boss. When she visits kindergarten she will have to give in sometimes. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

This is an important issue because the group of children at the *Tagesmutter* is small in numbers and, as Dagmar claimed, the familiarity between the children in her care prevents the necessity to be assertive. The younger children in the day care group also may enjoy the company of even younger children and benefit from their different position.

Another task identified by childminders and *Tagesmütter* is to help children to cope with transitions. Most importantly the transition from being cared for solely at home to being also looked after by a family day care provider.

> But before she has never been used to any partings. So that's a good thing as well. She seems to getting used to leave her mum and dad. ... So when she goes to play group and school it won't be so dramatic for her. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

The literature for childminders and *Tagesmütter* draws attention to the necessity to settle new children at the family day care provider (Kurth 1997; Hobart and Frankel 1999). In this period of transition not only the children starting at the childminder, but other children are affected, too. Parents may stay over longer periods at the family day care provider's home and or children may be up-set. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* have to find ways to accommodate these 'interruptions' in their work routine. This can be a difficult task, particularly if women have no experience available that allows to model coping strategies. An understanding of how children experience being cared for by a childminder can not be likened to the experience of being cared for at home, and that therefore the experience of a mother cannot derive the necessary knowledge of minded children's emotional state (Bryant et al. 1980). The question of how to support all the

children in these transition periods may be even more difficult to answer by family day care providers and parents' alike[14]. Similarly, children cope better with the transition of leaving the care of a family day care provider when family day care provider and parents acknowledge the severity of it and offer support (Kurth 1997).

The last level of determinants highlights the differential limitations of family day care as perceived by childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Particularly childminders feel the need to take children out to offer stimulation they cannot provide. *Tagesmütter* appear more confident in their ability to organise beneficial learning situations at home or within the normal family routine.

Support and respite outside the home

Attending parent-and-toddler groups or visiting the playground has benefits for childminder, *Tagesmütter* and mothers, too[15]. Some of the interviewed *Tagesmütter* regularly met to go together to the parent-and-toddler group, to visit the playground or to go on outings. Childminders felt certain that they would meet the same colleagues and children at the regular meetings of the childminder or parents-and-toddler groups.

> I like best, really, that the children are occupied with other children for quite a while and are less interested in you. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

The pressure of attention demanding children may cease and, similar to the advantages for children parent-and-toddler groups offer a purpose for leaving the house and the opportunity to confront boredom and isolation.

> Most of the parent-and-toddler groups around here do have a lot of childminders going. So we have a lot of friends there. So it's another way of us getting together as well. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

While the children gain social skills childminders and *Tagesmütter* exchange gossip and information. It reaches from "the naughty things that they have got up to" (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years) to the discussion of business problems.

> If you are having a problem, which very rarely happens, if it is, say, a problem about a fee or a problem about to charge for a holiday or something like that, you can ask everybody else, what they would do. ... And us as established minders can help new minders. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

In England particularly long established childminders were advisors to newcomers. They offered advice how to set up a charging structure, what should be fixed in the contract and how to handle difficult (business) situations. In Germany long established *Tagesmütter* held this function concerning how it is to work as a *Tagesmutter* and the business side of it, too. This mutual support also included discussions of how to cope with inspections in England, or how to co-operate with the officer from the *Jugendamt*.

Meeting other childminders, *Tagesmütter* and mothers also offered a chance to discuss how to manage children's behaviour, diets and ask other women for advice.

> Gustaf is already three and I don't know if he is backward in his development. And it is always quite good to ask other *Tagesmütter* whether they look after a child that is not as far developed as the others, or so. Then other *Tagesmütter* have a look at him at one of these meetings and say, "Well, leave it, stay calm. Everything seems to be still normal." ... I am sometimes uncertain and get some certainty from the others. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

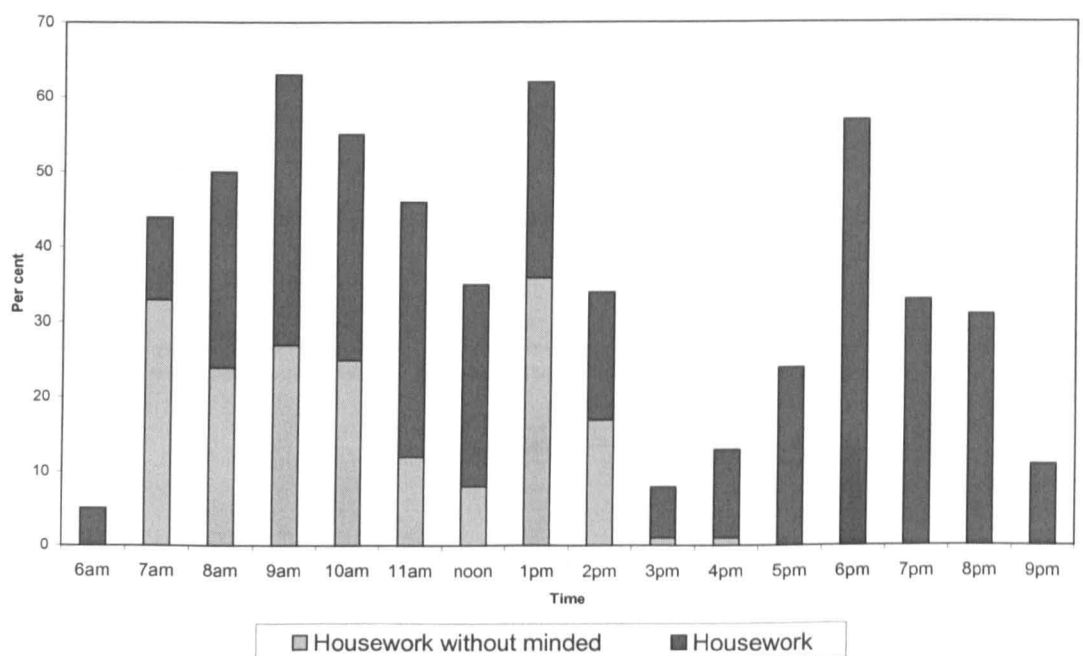
Dagmar is one of the longest standing *Tagesmütter* in Rostock. Other *Tagesmütter* turn to her with business or insurance problems. However, coming across a problematic child she was well aware of her limited knowledge about child development. Her contact with other *Tagesmütter* with childcare training allowed her to ask for professional advice. Other interviewees made it quite clear during the interviews that the awareness of different levels of knowledge about children and their care is high among *Tagesmütter*.

Squeezing in housework

> I can do little bits of jobs around the house, if I wanted to. But I tend to get everything done before she comes. So I can spend good time with her. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

The diary sheets also contained information about housework undertaken during working time. Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.9 compile information about tidying, dusting, vacuum cleaning, shopping, making beds, ironing etc., but exclude food preparation. These tasks were sometimes undertaken while there were no children present, while they were playing or while they were sleeping. Figure 6.8 distinguishes between housework tasks undertaken when there were no minded children present or these children were asleep and housework tasks undertaken when minded children were around or the respondent did not offer information about the presence of minded children. It can be assumed that making beds and ironing are housework tasks that benefit the family of the day care providers. Yet, cleaning and shopping can be seen as part of the care for children.

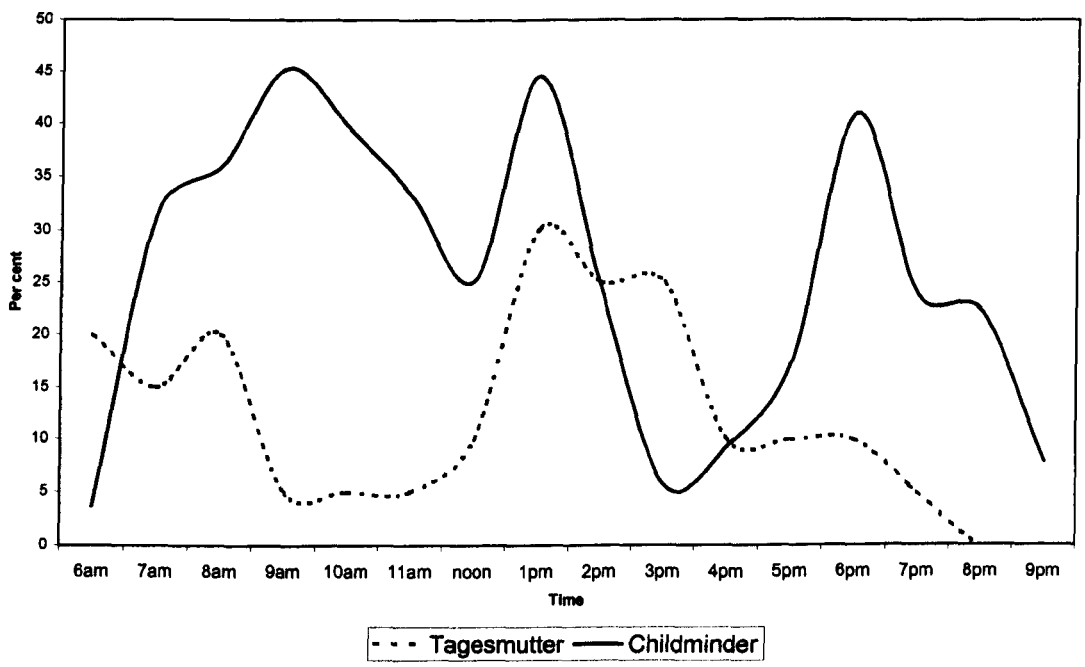
Figure 6.8: England: Housework with or without children



The example of childminders show that housework other than cooking is squeezed in whenever possible and extends the working day (unpaid). Less housework is done when childminders are busy outside the home and during the afternoon when children are back from school. However, many childminders combine school runs and visiting children's activities with shopping trips. Childminders also engage less frequently in housework tasks during the afternoon when children are collected by their parents.

A comparison of housework in both countries (Figure 6.9) appears to show that *Tagesmütter* do less housework – or at least report less on their diary sheets[16]. As in England, houseworking times peak when children are sleeping and in the morning. Less can be done when the *Tagesmutter* is not at home because she takes children to the playground.

Figure 6.9: Housework, compared



It is important to keep in mind that housework can be divided into chunks taking up short periods of time. This contributes to the possibility that family day care providers, like female teleworkers are swapping rapidly between domestic and work tasks (Haddon and Silverstone 1993).

> How does a *Tagesmutter* cope [with housework] as well? That is the good thing about the work as a *Tagesmutter*. Somehow I can combine everything. When I cook the lunch then the day children join me in the kitchen. They paint or make things. You are not stirring in your pans all the time. When I peel the potatoes the others prepare [their play activities]. And you can start the washing machine as well. Vacuum cleaning is fitted in whenever you have time. It is possible somehow. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

> When the day child is here I do not devote all my time to the children but fit in some of the housework as well. It depends on the mood of the children. There are days it does not work out very well. And there are days they play beautifully together for some time without me. Then I can clear up the kitchen, do the washing or something like this. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

How well housework tasks slot into the daily routine depends on the family day care provider's organisational talents but also on unpredictable circumstances, like the mood of children, their needs of attention of care, or how well children sleep.

Conclusion

> You are not self-determined at all. Of course you can say we are going shopping now, or we are going to the doctor, or we are visiting the parent-and-toddler group now, and things like that. But all of these [activities] do not cover my needs. How quickly we arrive there, in what kind of mood and whether everything works out smoothly is not determined by me but by the children. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

The combination of levels of determination of the daily work routine developed at family day care providers can build into a firm structure leaving little freedom to manoeuvre for

the individual childminder or *Tagesmutter*. Particularly childminders looking after children attending other childcare provision and looking after children part-time are constrained and are dealing with a highly fragmented daily schedule. German *Tagesmütter* have more choice in how to organise their day, because as they care for children of pre-kindergarten age, children do not use other childcare facilities and the majority of children attends full-time family day care.

The analysis of the working day of childminders and *Tagesmütter* showed what these women view as children's needs, informed by their cultural context and their experience as mothers and for some women as trained childcare workers. The pressure arising out of cultural perception of children's needs is reflected in the use of other childcare provision, and in daily practices. In England this perception is particularly played out on Level two, where daily working routines include the attendance of parent-and-toddler groups and other child-centred activities outside the home. In Germany the perception of children's needs appear to have a tighter grip on Level three (children's physiological needs). *Tagesmütter* clearly formulated their ideas of good quality childcare. For example, children sit at the table at meal times, children (and adults) need a hot lunch, preferably home cooked, and children need to rest after lunch in a bed. These standards tie *Tagesmütter* down at a certain time in a certain place. This is reinforced by the generally shared view that routines as such are essential and beneficial for children. Depending on the individual background women in both countries draw their understanding of what children need from either their experience of being a mother or their training and practice as childcare worker.

The legal framework of family day care in particular and childcare provision in general impacts too on the hierarchy of work routine determinants of childminders and *Tagesmütter*. In England it prescribes where childminding takes place based on safety considerations leading to implications for daily routines. What other kinds of childcare provision and activities are available and are used result in family day care providers' Level two and Level four commitments. Childminders are tied to the timetable of children activities like parent-and-toddler groups and view these opportunities as important for children's education and social development.

In the case of *Tagesmütter* the limited availability of parent-and-toddler group equivalents, yet good full-time group care provision for three-year-olds has two interacting results. *Tagesmütter* are less bound to other timekeeping commitments (Level

two) and are more likely provide education for children in their care at home. Opportunities for socialising with other children – on playgrounds – are also less bound to fixed times. A further effect is that with a clearer idea of demands situated on Level four, the limits of family day care are drawn. *Tagesmütter* view family day care as appropriate for children up to kindergarten-age. By then children are ready to join a larger group of children and benefit from new structures and tasks. Childminders, in contrast, do not appear to question whether family day care is appropriate, for example for school children, or whether another kind of set-up would be better suited.

The examination of the determinants of daily work routines also shows that women's experience as mothers or as childcare workers in a day centre has limited use as model for family day care. A mother's experience is not necessarily transferable to other children, nor does it necessarily inform her how to deal with a group of children, or with caring for other people's child in her (not the child's) home (Bryant et al. 1980). A childcare worker's experience of working with a larger group of children may provide a sound platform of understanding children and working with a group, but may not be able to inform how to organise other work, like cooking and cleaning, in a way that they provide the appropriate context of pedagogical work.

The different ability to develop routines and the difference in fragmentation also impacts on the compatibility of the three roles, that of housewife, mother and childcare provider. Working with children of a narrow age range, who sleep over a longer period of time after lunch makes it easier to fulfil domestic tasks. *Tagesmütter* who are having set aside space solely used for the care of children and working jointly with another family day care provider expressed a clear divide between their roles. They may use their break-time for fitting in some domestic labour – as housewife and mother.

The focus on the daily routine of childminders and *Tagesmütter* inevitably concentrated on family day care provider and children. From this angle parents mainly figured as bringing and collecting children, and spending time at work. But parents actually play a bigger role in family day care. Here the question arises whether care offered to other people's children may clash with parents' expectations about the service. The next chapter concentrates on the relationship between family day care provider and parents and examines how childminders and *Tagesmütter* combine the roles of business woman, as childcarer and as service provider to parents.

[1] (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

[2] Although the analysis of the diary sheets made use of quantitative methods, i.e. counting the frequencies of activities, I feel that the data collected with this instrument is not precise enough to justify e.g. statements based on e.g. measures of central tendencies. The lack of quantifiable, precision has several reasons. This method of data collection does not capture the many activities that take place at the same time or in rapid succession. For example it is easier to note down 'did the breakfast dishes' than to note down 'while I washed the dishes we talked about ... or rhymed' etc. Any activity noted down in the grid may become heavier weight than it actually had. Additionally women showed differing abilities to express themselves in writing. Notably German *Tagesmütter* with childcare training will have had considerable practice in formulating child-centred activities. Yet the analysis of the diary sheets allows investigating patterns of the working day of childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

[3] These three women were interviewed before the questionnaires were sent out (see Chapter 2).

[4] The compulsory school age in Germany is six years. Children are expected to make their own way to and from school. It marks an important step from kindergarten child to school child.

[5] The practice of dividing tasks into 'sleep guard' and tidying and afternoon preparation (including a break for both) is usual in day centres.

[6] My personal experience of working in day centres and kindergartens in West Germany made me aware that certain structures were in place due to the overall organisation of the institution. However, in hindsight it was often not possible to work out whether the organisation of the whole institution or children's needs were the crucial factor in developing the routine. Here some examples: taking children out into the fresh air in the morning was liked by the cleaners because they could do their job faster and more efficiently. Mealtimes were depending on when the food was ready and that again had to fit into the working hours and routines of the kitchen staff. Children were perceived to need a nap after lunch. However, that fitted nicely with the requirements of allowing staff their lunch hour.

[7] Some childminders differentiated between giving meals to the minded or to their family members. The mealtimes of minded children and mealtimes of other family members or when this difference was not specified coincided at noon and after school. When childminders provided snacks they were less likely to differentiate between minded children and other family members. When only meals or snacks are considered where childminders explicitly stated that they were for the minded children three 'meal peaks' were shown. The least pronounced at breakfast time, the sharpest at lunchtime and another one after school.

[8] It appears quite common for childminders that they take their lunch separately.

[9] An internet search using the words 'children' and 'sleep', and '*Kinder*' and '*schlafen*' resulted in an abundance of further web-pages, discussion groups, book offers and special editions of magazines.

[10] The diary sheet with the smallest amount of information returned by the *Tagesmütter* showed as only entry '*Mittagsschlaf*' (after-lunch sleep).

[11] One of the important issues of healthy sleep is the perceived necessity of laying flat. Therefor young infants can sleep in a pram (as long as it is safe) since they are small enough for a pram. A pushchair or a sofa would not be perceived as appropriate.

[12] However, this single case was involuntarily. Other childcare commitments clashed with the opening hours of the parent-and-toddler group.

[13] Only three *Tagesmütter* did not include the daily trip to the play-ground in their routine. Two of those were working jointly with another *Tagesmutter* and had also a large garden equipped with out-door toys. The other interviewee regularly invited another *Tagesmutter* and the children in her charge to play in her large, well equipped garden.

[14] The English handbook for childminders (Hobart and Frankel 1999) does not mention the transition period of leaving the care of the childminder.

[15] The play-ground is a place where mothers meet mothers, or including the increasing number of fathers involved in childcare, where parents meet parents. Usually they provide an informal atmosphere and it becomes easy to talk to other parents or childminders. Therefore women who are new to a housing estate would visit a playground in order to make contacts.

[16] It appears that particularly *Tagesmütter* with childcare training emphasised their childcare work. Yet the interviews showed that their daily routines contained housework, too.

Chapter 7: Managing the boundaries of a caring business

> I think the one thing, the most important thing you need to have is a good relationship with the mother – not the child. A good relationship with the mother, because if you don't get on well with the mother you obviously, you know, it's going to damage the relationship with the child in the long term. And also it makes it easier, you know. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

> I think, if I didn't get on with the parents, I would have to finish the child. I would not be able to have them, because I could not take the tension. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

The service provided for parents has three distinctive aspects: it is the family day care provider's role to enable parents, or rather mothers to work; to take responsibility for a child delegated by parents; and to receive money for her services. Although these aspects are distinctive, they are inter-linked and a conflict concerning any one aspect has the potential to result in the breakdown of the childcare arrangement. The relationship between family day care provider and parents has for each of the three aspects distinctive characteristics. An important determinant of the characteristics of these aspects of family day care is that the care for the children is delivered through a business relationship between the self-employed provider and parents, within the regulatory framework of legislation.

At times it may not appear very clear who the beneficiary of family day care is. There are the parents who make use of this service and there are the children who are cared for by the childminder or the *Tagesmutter*. Much policy emphasis is on childcare as a means to allow parents, i.e. mothers to work. This can lead to a dissonance between the business role of the family day care provider and how she sees her role as 'childcare professional'. Additionally a division between the cared for and the service buyer (parent(s)-with-children) blurs the situation when family day carers feel they look after parents, too. That this can be a distinct task of childminders is expressed by a pilot scheme engaging

childminders for children of teenage mothers, who themselves may need a considerable amount of support (Department for Education and Employment 2001b).

What exactly does the role of 'service provider to parents' entail? Women with child related occupations utilize their professional experience and knowledge. The role of a trained childcare worker has an element of how to deal with the parents of the children in their care. Whether experiences of building relationships with parents within a formal setting of, for example a day centre can be applied within the private setting of the family day care provider's home and to what extent is interesting. In relation to the work with children, the legal frameworks in neither Britain nor Germany prescribe professional training. This implicitly suggests that women draw on their experiences with their own children and the knowledge gained in the context of being mother[1]. When the role model for family day care providers is based on being a mother, can this be extended to the relationship with parents of the cared-for-children? Do childminders and *Tagesmütter* view themselves as a 'replacement sister' to the parents in line with their perception of the role of a family day care provider as a 'replacement mum' to the child? The resulting uncertainty plays an important role in all aspects of the service provided by the childminder or *Tagesmutter* and will be examined in this chapter.

To begin with let us have a look at how childminders see themselves in relation to the parents of the minded children. The emerging questions and some counter-intuitive results are picked up in the following sections. In turn they examine the business relationship, how the fact that this form of childcare is a service for working parents impacts on the relationship between family day care provider and parents, and how pedagogic decisions are made. The analysis of relationships between family day care providers and parents also shows that it is a dynamic relationship, changing over time. At this point it appears appropriate and important to point out that the analysis is based on the information offered by childminders and *Tagesmütter*: parents were not interviewed, due to time and resource restrictions.

How English childminders see themselves

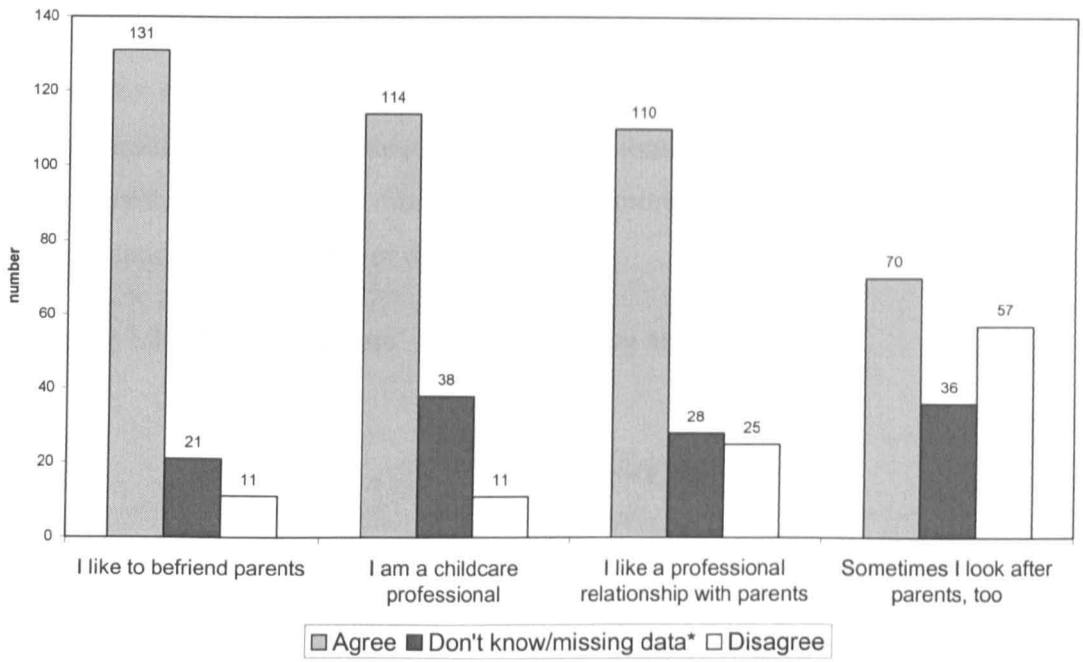
A majority of women saw themselves as childcare professionals (70 per cent of 163 active childminders), which was independent of whether they had some form of childcare

training apart from the pre-registration course, or similar. The questionnaires in England showed that most childminders hoped to befriend parents (80 per cent of 163 active childminder) and, at the same time many wished to develop a professional relationship with parents (68 per cent of 163 active childminders). The answers to these variables are summarised in Figure 7.1. The analysis did not show a correlation between the variable 'hoping to befriend parents' and the variable 'wishing to develop a professional relationship'. The wish to befriend parents does not appear to exclude the aim of developing a professional relationship with parents. However, viewing oneself as a childcare professional was linked to the wish to develop a professional relationship with parents. There were 146 childminders who answered both questions. Of the active childminders who agreed with the statement 'I am a childcare professional' 80 per cent wished to develop a professional relationship with parents. This proportion dropped to 50 per cent of women who do not view themselves as childcare professionals ($p < 0.001$).

To feel like a childcare professional was linked to another possible way of experiencing the relationship with parents. Forty-three per cent of the 163 active childminders felt that sometimes parents need looking after, too, and women who feel that they are childcare professionals are more likely to agree. Fifty-two per cent of the women who describe themselves as childcare professionals feel as if sometimes they look after parents, too, compared to 29 per cent who do not feel like childcare professionals ($p < 0.05$).

At first sight the correlation or lack of correlation between the variables of childminders' self-perception are puzzling. Intuitively it appears to be difficult to strive for a professional relationship with parents at the same time as attempting to befriend parents. The quest for an explanation found a connection between the active childminders' wish to befriend parents and the variable 'sometimes I look after parents, too'. Just over half (52 per cent) of the childminders striving to befriend parents feel they are sometimes looking after parents, too. This proportion drops to 23 per cent for childminders who do not wish to befriend parents ($p < 0.01$).

Figure 7.1: What kind of relationships with parents? Active childminders' responses (N = 163)

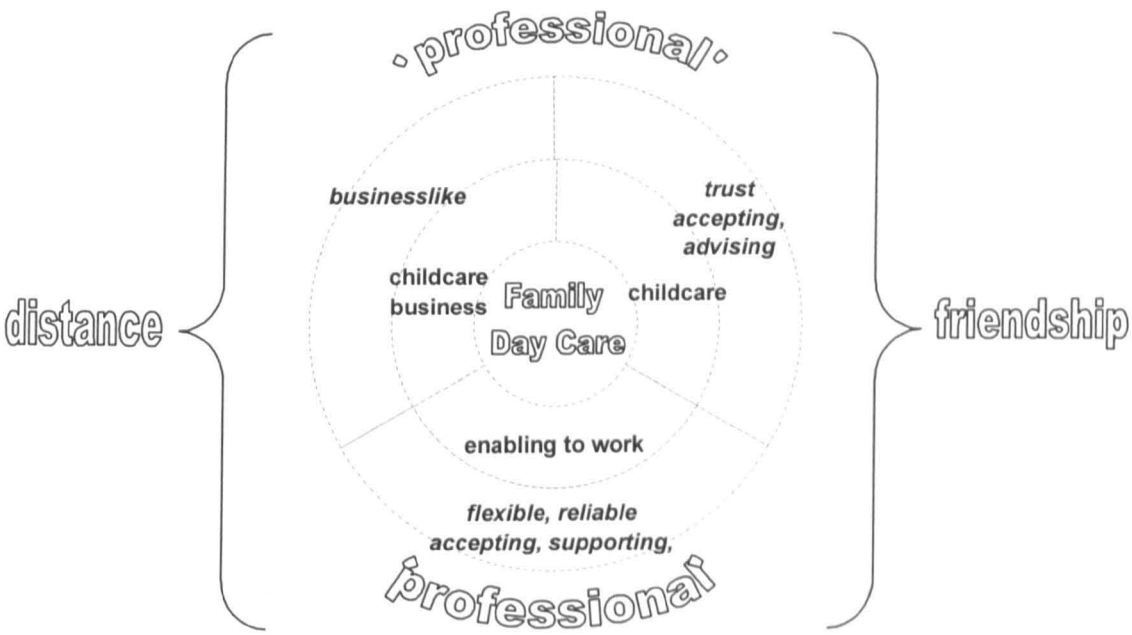


* Number of missing cases: 'I like to befriend parents' = 6; 'I am a childcare professional = 7; 'I like a professional relationship with parents' = 7; 'Sometimes I look after parents, too' = 13.

However, once the underlying assumption that one kind of relationship is desired across all three aspects of the service provided for parents is questioned, then the variables are not exclusive anymore and can exist side by side. Providing childcare services to working parents, standing up for one's business interests and looking after children may be perceived by family day care providers as demanding different kinds of relationships. The interviews in England and Germany investigated what childminders and *Tagesmütter* understood as a professional relationship, or as befriending a parents and so on, and to explore whether for each of the different aspects a form of relationship could be identified that fitted best and reduced possible tensions and conflicts. It became apparent that childminders and *Tagesmütter* couch these different facets of the family day care providers' task in the term 'professional'. Concerning the relationship with parents different forms of 'being professional' had to be positioned between distance and friendship (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 depicts the three aspects of family day care. Childminder and *Tagesmütter* offer replacement care for working mothers by caring for other people's children. This care is delivered through a business relationship. Each of these aspects need a different kind of relationship with parents and a different kind of approach taken by the family day care provider. In general the business relationship appears to demand some distance, whereas the collaboration between family day care provider and parents concerning childcare issues seems to demand a friendly relationship. The placement of the task of enabling mothers to go out to work seems to be more ambivalent and more difficult to place in relations to friendship or distance.

Figure 7.2: 'Professionalism' between distance and friendship



The use of the attribute 'professional' is interesting. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* used it to describe a successful relationship with parents within each of the three aspects of family day care. Similar to the use of 'professional' in the family day care providers' discourse a wide-ranging application can be found in the literature geared towards the childcare workforce. It has been used as exchangeable with 'businesslike' (e.g. National Childminding Association 2000a), or it can define the relationship with parents and with children as to a certain extent distant (Bruce and Meggitt 1999). How childminders and

Tagesmütter use the attribute 'professional' will be picked up as the three aspects of the provider-parent relationship is examined.

Mapping out the business relationship

> I think it is better to keep a distance and keep it on a professional level. Because, like when I had problems with the money, getting paid, I feel if I had been more friendly, it would have been harder to stick to my guns and say, well, I'm not having this, you know. If you keep it on a business level it is a bit easier to step back and let them see another side to you (laughs), you know. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* understand being businesslike, or as they called it 'professional', as a rather detached relationship with parents. It seems that family day care providers have to find a way to counter balance the image of mother's supporter and children's carers by decisiveness concerning business matters. If they are not successful parents are perceived to have the tendency to take advantage of childminders and *Tagesmütter.*

Social Services in England and the national family day care associations in England and in Germany advocate that a businesslike approach be taken by family day care providers (Arbeitsgemeinschaft tagesmütter - Bundesverband für Eltern Pflegeeltern und Tagesmütter e.V. 1992; National Childminding Association 1998a; 2000a). This has the purpose of heightening the status of family day care and is eagerly accepted by childminders (Ferri 1992). Publications of the National Childminding Association explaining the professional approach that ought to be taken by childminders include setting up a well-organised business, comprising up-to-date paperwork and businesslike manners (Hobart and Frankel 1999; National Childminding Association 2000a). The most successful way to maintain a positive business relationship is seen to be a matter of being up-front and clear. Here women perceived themselves as most businesslike or 'professional'.

> I tell parents exactly what I expect from and demand of them. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

> You give them – as long as you do things in advance, not just drop somebody in it at the last minute – say, put up my prices from today – you've got to give them advanced notice and ask them, if it is agreeable. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Being 'professional' entails that every business aspect is clearly set out and agreed in good time, as well as that family day care providers insist that agreements are met. Although *Tagesmütter* do not set the rates, as childminders have to do, they have to set out what is included in the price. Well drawn up contracts and meticulous bookkeeping, for example when children attended and which meals they received, is one way to prevent unnecessary discussions with parents. *Tagesmütter* with training and work experience in a kindergarten fall back on this way of administration – keeping attendance and meal lists[2].

The contract

> I wouldn't do it without a contract. I have a copy for me and a copy for them. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

The survey of childminders in the Northeast of England confirmed a strong commitment to fixing agreements in the form of contracts. Blank forms of contracts between the childminder and the parents are given out by the local authority or can be obtained from the NCMA. A very substantial 96 per cent of 163 active childminders had a contract with parents. The six women who had no contract with parents included childminders who looked-after-children who were related to them. In rating the importance of a contract 83 per cent of the childminders perceived it as very important and another 10 per cent as important. The remaining seven per cent were not sure or felt that contracts are a waste of time and paper.

For now let us have a look what is covered in the contracts between childminders and parents. Questionnaire responses included all childminder respondents, those who have children on their roll, those who are waiting to look after children and those who have stopped offering childcare. Therefore in some cases it includes the items that had been covered in the past or the items the childminder intends to include.

The questionnaire offered 20 items including 'other' that could be covered in a contract between parents and childminders[3]. Table 7.1 shows that most childminders covered the

most important business items, like hours working, payment and period of notice. More difficult to negotiate are the areas where the interests of the childminder and her family and the interests of the parents using her service may clash, like annual holidays and payment during annual holidays. A comparison of respondents having children on their roll and childminders who were hoping to find children shows that there is no difference for most of the items. Active childminders were slightly more likely to cover items concerning payment during annual holidays and occasional days off.

Table 7.1: Items covered in contract between active childminders and parents

Items covered in contract	Childminders (N = 163)	%
Times of minding	157	96
Payment for regular service	151	93
Period of notice required	144	88
Pay day	138	85
Charges when child absent due to parents' illness	134	82
Action when child is ill	130	80
Charges when absent on occasional days off	128	79
Date of review of contract	127	78
Provision of meals	126	77
Annual holiday of childminder	126	77
Annual holiday of parents	125	77
Payment during parents' annual holiday	121	74
What parents have to provide	117	72
Charges for absence due to bank holidays	107	65
Arrangements for activities (e.g. play-groups)	106	65
Payment during childminder's annual holiday	104	64
Payment for overtime	89	55
No-smacking agreement	64*	39
Agreement regarding the use of out-door toys	29	18
Use no contract	6	4
Missing data	1	

* Some childminders remarked that they are not allowed to smack or that they do not smack

Of the active childminders 157 used contracts that covered between 4 and 19 items[4]. The mean number of items was 14, the median 15 and the standard deviation 4.5. It is remarkable that 69 per cent of Sunderland's childminders covered less than the average in their contracts compared to 42 per cent of Newcastle's, 36 per cent of Durham's and 30 per cent of Gateshead's childminders ($p < 0.01$)[5]. The analysis of the questionnaires does not offer an explanation for this difference.

Childminders striving to develop a 'professional relationship' with parents were more likely to include as part of the contract what parents have to provide (nappies, spare clothes, food etc.) and were more likely to have a written agreement about the payment for over-time. Additionally it was more likely that they had an agreement over payments during the childminder's and the parents' annual holiday. A statistical relationship between the number of items covered in contracts could be found for childminders' attitude towards the relationship with parents. Nearly 70 per cent of the active childminders agreed with the statement 'I like to develop a professional relationship with parents'[6]. Sixty-three per cent of these had above average numbers of items covered in their contracts compared to 37 per cent of childminders who did not strive for a 'professional relationship' ($p < 0.01$). This confirms that developing a 'professional relationship' with parents includes a businesslike approach to setting up arrangements.

Ferri's (1992) study and the small-scale research in Gateshead four years later (Gelder 1997) nevertheless showed a great distaste for the business side and particularly for negotiations concerning money. Yet the survey did not altogether confirm this. A third of the active childminders ($N = 163$) agreed with the statement 'I enjoy negotiating contracts' (11 per cent agreed strongly, 22 per cent agreed), a further 18 per cent was not sure about that, and just under 50 per cent disagreed (32 per cent disagreed strongly).

Yet childminders who claimed to 'like the negotiation of contracts' neither secured contracts covering more items, nor did their claim coincide with the wish to form a 'professional relationship' with parents. It was influenced by taking part in the pre-registration course (that increased the number of items covered in the contract), but does not seem to relate to other statements about the relationship with parents in the questionnaire. The explanation for this rather counter-intuitive outcome may be that negotiating contracts is seen as something that has to be done, whether liked or disliked. Thus even women who dislike settling contracts accept it as necessary in order to protect themselves.

Setting up the contract can take the form of using the form to structure the information given to parents. Asked if she found the contract forms issued by her local authority useful Deborah answered,

> Yeah, they are because you can, what varies and so on, you got your name and everything, the hours what you do, what you charge, what your holidays are, you know. Because that's, that's very stringent, you know. Because I get paid full for bank holidays, half day, well like a half-day - well, if they'll go off for a week and when there is a bank holiday you'll have full for the Monday, half for the rest of the week. Uhm, sickness: You get a full-day wages for the first day of sickness, but half after that. So this all got to be down on here. Because parents take it as a life, you know. Thing is, as you go through it with them and explain it to them, they know exactly how they stand. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

Deborah's answer does not convey the impression that parents could negotiate or alter the contract. Deborah uses the contract form rather as a means to provide more weight to her conditions. Using a document in this way may contribute to rendering the negotiation process more agreeable to the childminder.

Margaret has taken a different approach. She is one of the women who agreed to the statement 'I enjoy negotiating contracts' in the questionnaire. In her eyes the contract is the confirmation of building a successful rapport with parents and child.

> When the child first comes I do like two or three visits before I actually take the child. So that you know before you sign the contract that it's going to work out. There is the child [that] is going to take to you. There are the parents who are going to take to you. And if you can work with the parents. And then after about three visits, then, I usually give them the contract, you know. They are going to have a look at it. And if they don't agree with it... (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

To Margaret it is important that parents understand what they are signing and she accepts that they may disagree. She is prepared to come to a compromise as she explained at another point during the interview. There she described how she and a mother arrived at an agreement about charges, which she had to explain later to the father of the child.

In the process of setting up new childcare arrangements with parents childminders appear to act as businesswomen. Yet, emerging friendly relationships with parents challenge their role as a businesswoman. For example, over three-quarters of all childminders have established a review date in their contracts (78 per cent of 162 active childminders). Despite this obvious opportunity to increase charges without confronting parents unexpectedly childminders found it difficult to do so. It is difficult even for childminders who feel quite comfortable about negotiating terms and conditions initially with parents.

> That's the only thing - you have to renew your contract. I usually, uhm, if I'm going to change anything, we change it once a year. And that's the only bit I'm uncomfortable about having to sort of say, look, I'm putting my fees up ten pence and hour. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

> It's always difficult asking for extra money. ... That's probably the only time you are going to get that knot in your stomach about speaking to a parent about something, if you got to ask for it, or even if you decide you are going to ask for a pay rise. That's very difficult. You say, I've been minding for two years and I charge the same fee and I want an extra 50 pence or something like that. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

The reason why it seems to be so very difficult to increase charges is connected to two areas many childminders find awkward. One is that the motivation to care for other people's children is not entirely the love or the enjoyment of children but that there is a financial interest. Caring implies reciprocity, altruism and taking responsibility (Folbre 1995; Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). When these services are provided for reward concerns arise whether in this way the 'warm glow' is lost (Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). If it is difficult to monitor quality when the service is bought by a third party (Strassmann 1993) it also may feel tricky to convince parents that an increase of charges is justified.

Germany

Due to the exceptional situation that all *Tagesmütter* are registered in Rostock, all of these women have a contract with parents[7]. The content of the contract is determined by its two functions. On one hand it formalises agreements with parents. On the other hand it has to hold the information necessary for the *Jugendamt* to pay the subsidy of childcare costs to the *Tagesmutter*. *Tagesmütter* can use the forms for contracts issued by the *Tagesmütter* Association.

> We have to fix a care agreement. The law prescribes that. There are certain points that ought to be included in the care agreement. However, in principle we can make our own contracts. What we think we have to include we can include. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

The contract includes basic information about *Tagesmutter*, parents and the child. It includes the hours of care provided– information important for the *Jugendamt* but also to the *Tagesmutter* in case she charges overtime. It contains agreements for extra charges, most importantly the charge for food. The period of notice is fixed. This is usually four weeks before the end of the calendar month[8]. It can include regulations for holidays of the *Tagesmutter* and the parents, regulations in the case the *Tagesmutter* is ill, permission to use public transport and play grounds. It may incorporate who is responsible for additional insurance cover. It also may have a clause that sick children are not supposed to attend.

As in England the contract form can be used as a list of what needs to be talked about with parents in order to come to an agreement. Parents may not be aware of the complicated business situation of *Tagesmütter*. This becomes apparent when *Tagesmütter* ask for holiday pay and pay when children are absent due to their or their parents' illness.

> The money they [the parents] did not want to pay. Then it is difficult to explain to parents that I can't search for other children for this short period of time. That I can't find a replacement child for the three or four weeks they go on holiday. And if I would do that, yes, then they are unlucky. Then they can't come back to me after their holiday. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

Particularly Karin who worked as a *Tagesmutter* before unification and then, until recently, without contracts appreciates the security they offer. Other *Tagesmütter* agree that the contracts can be used to emphasise that parents have to keep their side of the agreement. Above all it may be used to ensure parents' punctuality.

Listening to the active members of the *Tagesmütter* Association gave the impression of a businesslike approach taken by the women, reflected in the use of contracts. Yet, *Tagesmütter* did not cover every little detail of their agreements in their contracts. This becomes apparent from the regulation of their holidays. Only 11, just over half of the *Tagesmütter* respondents had taken the length of their holidays fixed in the contract. Of those, five had taken their exact amount of holidays within the last 12 months. One *Tagesmutter* had taken two more days and another five days more holiday. The remaining four *Tagesmütter* had not taken between 10 and 20 days of their holidays. Here Karin describes her situation.

> I have not been on holiday for 15 years, never, I did not go. Then they [Karin's children] say all the time, 'Mum, use the contract, go on holiday'. However, as I said, this never worked out. And then I feel sorry for the parents. I always see that they have to work. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

It is important to keep in mind that going on holiday entails that the parents of all the children looked after by a *Tagesmutter* have to find another childcare solution for this time or take holidays by themselves[9].

In Rostock the contract between *Tagesmutter* and parents can be used in a quite different way. It can play a role regarding the *Jugendamt*'s involvement in the establishment of childcare arrangements. Usually the signing of the contract is the end of the process. It begins with parents approaching a *Tagesmutter*. When parents and *Tagesmutter* come to a verbal agreement the parents approach the *Jugendamt*. The responsible officer at the *Jugendamt* decides upon the parents' eligibility for subsidy and the amount of money the parents have to contribute. Then the parents return to the *Tagesmutter* and both parties sign the contract.

Two of the *Tagesmütter* reported that they had lost out on work during this process. Both claim that an official responsible for *Tagesmütter* in the *Jugendamt*, gives preference to others. Birgit tells her side of the story:

> Frau Berger, she had a look. [She] said she would take her [the child] immediately at the 19th. That is today. Everything was fine and then I phone Frau Müller [*Jugendamt*], to ask why Frau Berger does not turn up. She said that she had offered her two other *Tagesmütter*. ... She [the mother] said yes and I was waiting [for her to come]... (Birgit, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

In order to protect themselves from losing business in this way these two women think of getting parents to sign a contract before they approach the *Jugendamt*. They feel the *Jugendamt* has to accept the parents' wish and has to acknowledge that parents have to keep to the contract. However, in the case that the *Jugendamt* does not establish the eligibility for subsidy leading to the parents not wishing to take up childcare, they are willing to cancel the contract.

Limited protection: how well do contracts work?

> I looked after children and not being paid. ... There is not a lot you can do. You don't get paid. I looked after a little boy for eight weeks. I kept saying, now, you need to pay me. You need to pay me. And I said to them, look ... it's eight weeks now, you need to pay me. Uhm, and they never came back. I don't know whether they do it quite often. But, uhm, so, but that's happened quite a few times. So, that's my professionalism [laughs]. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Under the aspect that family day care is a paid service to parents the most obvious reason why childcare arrangements break down is because parents do not pay. It appears odd that Liz looked after this child for eight weeks without pay and that she had been a few times in this situation. She may share with other childminders the dilemma of providing stability for children in the face of unacceptable behaviour on the part of parents (Mooney and Munton 1998). The ultimate response to non-payment is the refusal to supply childcare. Yet when parents meet their obligations but not as set out in the contract, it becomes more difficult to find an appropriate way to deal with this conflict.

> I never got paid on time. No, no, never is the wrong way. They were funny with money. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

Through the English interviews runs a genuine lack of understanding why parents are 'funny with money', that is paying late, haggling over a few pounds, seeking the cheapest childminder and so on. Previous research has shown that feeling uncomfortable with discussing money matters on the part of the childminder meets parents' feelings of embarrassment of engaging in the act of paying for childcare (Ferri 1992). Yet the interviewed childminders wondered why parents are so tight with money when buying care for their 'most prized possession, their child'. The interviewed childminders did not put forward that parents might feel intimidated, too.

In Germany the payment of the refund of at least 70 per cent of the fixed rate directly to the *Tagesmutter* by the *Jugendamt* seems to prevent conflicts over pay[10]. The remaining 30 per cent and the money for food seemed to be paid regularly by parents. A confident stance of offering a service worth paying is particularly supported when family day care providers hold childcare qualification. Then their training and their experience underpin the service they can sell to parents. The benefits to children in their care can be construed as worth paying for. None of the *Tagesmütter* told stories of not being paid for childcare services they had provided. For these *Tagesmütter* a large area of potential conflict and contract failure was pre-empted. This is in stark contrast to British family day care providers who are solely responsible for their micro-business and the business relationship with parents.

Replacement childcare for working parents

As far as the background of the child's family is known in other studies, childminders are used to cover childcare during parents' working hours[11]. In 1990 only one per cent of the pre-school children of non-working mothers was looked after by a registered childminder (Meltzer 1994)[12]. These may have been children who were in the care of a childminder because they were perceived to be in 'need' and eligible to childcare services financed by their local authority. Of the 451 children looked after by childminders in the Northeast of England who returned the questionnaire, the Local Authority paid the fees for 25 children (6 per cent)[13]. In Germany children 'in need' fall under a different responsibility within the *Jugendamt* connected to foster care and is financed out of a different account. Another small group of children is in the care of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* for other reasons. This may include a few hours respite for parents or the hope of parents and *Tagesmutter*

alike of keeping a group of children together, although the eligibility for refund has ceased to exist due to the mother's unemployment.

Childminders see themselves as offering a service to working parents, of enabling mothers to go out to work. The returned questionnaires showed that the women who had an optimistic outlook on their future as childminders based their optimism on the rising number of mothers entering employment. Similarly *Tagesmütter* respondents argued that the need for family day care will increase because working hours appear to become more complicated.

Furthermore the objective of family day care is explicitly underpinned by eligibility criteria for childcare subsidies. In both countries, provided children are not classified as 'in need', parents have to be in work, education or training[14]. More implicitly this function of family day care is underlined in publications concerning mothers' efforts to return to employment. Childminders are seen to be well placed to fill the existing childcare gaps for mothers returning to work after maternity leave and students since they are flexible and offer particularly suitable care for young babies and toddlers (Department for Education and Employment 2000d). Additionally they are seen as particularly valuable in offering services at unconventional times for shift workers (Department for Education and Employment 1998; 2000d). Another place where childminders and *Tagesmütter* are shown as the solution of how to combine work with family are advice books for young families (e.g. Leach 1997; Health Education Authority 1998; Wolf 1998).

More covert indicators, that family day care is a service for working parents, or particularly working mothers, can be found in the literature targeting family day care providers and parents using or intending to use this form of childcare. Hobart and Frankel felt the necessity to remind childminders that they have to 'respect the decision of others to return to work, even if their children are very young' (p. 20 Hobart and Frankel 1999). Kurth (1997) brings to the attention of *Tagesmütter* that the mother seeking childcare for her child may feel torn between wishing to spend time with her child and looking forward to going to work.

This aspect of family day care crucially influences how family day care providers draw boundaries defining their working time or the availability of services for parents. Parents depend on the physical availability of the childminder or *Tagesmutter* to care for their

children when they have to go to work. Particularly where parents have few rights to take time off work when their children are ill, as in England, the dependency on the family day care provider increases[15]. Many childminders and *Tagesmütter* acknowledged parents' need for reliable childcare by stating during the interviews that 'family day care providers do not fall ill'.

> It's just like me I wouldn't do with ringing up and say: I don't feel well today. I'm not working. Hah, I would have to ring up five parents just to say that. It's just not worth [it]. I would rather work, you know, quite honestly. Don't let people down. Because they basically need you to be there, you know. They rely on you. They really do. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

They can further provide parents with peace of mind, if there are some emergency plans. Childminders involved in an informal childminder network can supply contact to another childminder who may take care of the children. This works particularly well when children and perhaps parents know the emergency childminder. In Germany parents appreciate when children know the emergency *Tagesmutter*. Here the *Jugendamt* helps to find emergency family day care.

Family day care providers who offer childcare to parents who are working shifts or are working flexible hours have to develop a system where the information is passed on early enough in order to make necessary adjustments. This seems to work best when parents write a list for the childminder concerning days and time and the family day care provider informs parents as soon as possible about times of unavailability. Compared with accounts of English childminders, the *Tagesmütter* interviewed appeared to be less confronted with demands of flexible or constantly changing working hours.

When parents turn out to be less reliable than expected concerning bringing and collecting times, family day care providers can either adapt to this by becoming even more flexible or can establish incentives to improve reliability. The first approach may include that problems are defined out of existence. Liz was most consistent in taking this route. She insists that she does not charge parents, when they are late, only if this is pre-arranged. She knows that this extra time does build up over weeks and month, but in her own words, she is 'just too soft'.

> Most of my parents, we just talk about things. And we don't have a problem. Uhm, and if I get irritated, I just don't say anything. ... It does not build up, because I don't let it. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years).

At the other end of the spectrum are the childminders and *Tagesmütter* charging for overtime. Deborah charged overtime with rates by the half an hour. Nearly half of the German respondents had overtime charges in place. In between these two positions were childminders and *Tagesmütter* who understood that sometimes situations arose for parents where they could not help it but being late, due to traffic, short-term employer demand etc. The practice of childminders and *Tagesmütter* shows that they do their best to be flexible and fit their working hours around the working or study hours of parents (Chapter 4).

> I don't know how much [flexibility] they expect, because I tend to offer it. There has never been a time where I have said, I can't do this. I've tried my very best to help out. Because at the end of the day the parents are working and they've got to stick to a routine at work. And if work asks them to do something, it's very hard for them to turn it down. Where as from my point of view, if I'm capable of doing it, I'll do it. Just to help, make sure that they are showing, that they are flexible and, for an employer, which I think is more important. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* are also prepared to take on childcare duties in emergencies, for example if parents have to attend a funeral. However, family day care providers draw a boundary when they cannot see a pressing reason, why parents are not able to look after their child.

> My opinion is that when parents have holidays the child belongs to them. That's why you have holidays. If they [the parents] have something planned they can ask me. I look after the child then, too. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

Mothers on holiday or having finished their daily work cease to have the accepted right to use the family day carers' service. Family day carers may refuse to look after children

whose mother wants to go shopping, for example. A comparison of childminders and *Tagesmütter* reveals the impact the different charging and payment structures have on conflicts between family day care provider and parents. An English childminder who had been approached by a mother to look after the children at the weekend, so she could go shopping refused on the grounds, that it is her weekend she needed to recover her strength and be there for her own family. She did not feel obliged to provide childcare for the mother's purpose. However, childminders appear to believe that parents use as little paid childcare as possible, and that it is in parents' financial interest to keep the hours children spend in the care of the childminder as short as possible. The flat rate paid to *Tagesmütter* can be interpreted as being the rate to cover all of the parents' childcare needs. Some *Tagesmütter* safeguard their childcare work-free time by charging rates up to £3.57 per hour overtime.

Several of the *Tagesmütter* argued, that in this day and age parents must have chosen to have children and must have been aware of the consequences. Nobody, so they argued, had forced them to have children and therefore all children ought to be wanted children. This led to an expectation, that parents should wish to spend as much time as possible with their children. Of course these *Tagesmütter* were well aware of the difficulties of shopping or visiting a hairdresser with a small child. Yet, they clearly felt these were typical problems, coming with parenthood and expected parents to cope.

Another implication of the aspect that family day care is a service for working parents is that childcare arrangements are expected and accepted to end when mothers lose their work, when working hours change and a new patchwork of informal and unpaid formal childcare arrangements is set up, or when children simply grow out of the need for a childminder or *Tagesmutter*. Conflicts arise when parents do not inform the family day care provider about changes or imminent changes.

> She was going to change. She was a full-time teacher and she was going part-time. I didn't find that out from her. I found it out from somebody else. Just tittle-tattle. ... You know, this is my job, you know, if I am going to have half my hours cut, that is half a wage. And, you know, everybody needs to know, to plan their life. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

> The mother told me she was working but she did not work. And she lied to me about her working hours. She took advantage of me, the child stayed longer and I found out that she was not working. ... I was very disappointed. Then I said, I can't see the point and terminated the contract. (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

The above quotes, one from a childminder the other one from a *Tagesmutter*, have two elements. One is the effect on childcare arrangements. The childminder concluded that the mother changing from a full-time post to a part-time post would consequently cut the hours of childcare. The *Tagesmutter* provided a service to a mother who did not work. A further implication in the German context was that the mother also ceased to be eligible for the subsidy of childcare costs, but had not informed the *Jugendamt*. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* who found themselves in these or similar situations were extremely disappointed. To find out from other sources than the parents themselves that mothers take up childcare services under false pretences left them feeling deceived. Consequently the childcare arrangements broke down.

Another implication of family day care as a service for working parents is that sometimes arrangements are set up hastily since parents need childcare from one day to another. The underlying reasons stretch from the sudden breakdown of previous childcare arrangements, to a new job that starts immediately, to problems of finding suitable childcare in time, to a lack of understanding by parents about the process of arranging childcare. It also is connected to the next aspect, the need to pay for this service.

> When they first phoned up, they were so desperate for a childminder, that they just said, they were going to come here and that they will bring her and that is the first day and that would be it. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

One consequence is that family day care provider and parents may not have time to assess thoroughly whether they suit each other and whether they can develop a positive relationship before they sign the contract.[16] The accounts of the interviewed childminders and *Tagesmütter* suggest that such childcare arrangements are particularly prone to break down within a short period of time. The context of very limited and fragmented childcare provision in England and strict regulations regarding child/staff ratios as well as high

costs leaves parents in a position where they do not feel they have a choice of childcare provision (Mooney and Munton 1998). Parents in Rostock have more choice and therefore are less dependent on one particular childcare provider. This variance in parents' opportunities for voting with their feet means that the power balance between English and German family day care providers and parents differs. This affects strategies of how to approach conflicts developed by childminders and *Tagesmütter*, as we shall see later on in this chapter.

'Professional' service versus quasi-employment

> [Y]ou have got to start to think, well, you know, I am doing a service here and the parents know I am doing a service and they expect me to charge for that service. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

> They [the parents] looked upon Ruth as being their employee, not as providing a service that they were paying for. (Peter, husband of Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years, jointly registered)

The question what it actually is parents are paying for reveals another potential conflict and the necessity for family day care providers to draw boundaries. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* have to decide whether parents buy the right to childcare when they need it or whether the times when childcare services are provided can be negotiated. It is the boundary between quasi-employment and 'professional' service provision.

Childminders in England cannot fall back on a positioning of family day care as beneficial to children side-by-side with other (educational) Early Years Provision by the legislator. Childminding is, apart from minimum standards, not defined in relation to the benefits to the child. Hours and pay are negotiated between parents and family day care provider. Between these two parties a business relationship has to be formed.

According to the accounts of childminders and *Tagesmütter* some parents clearly anticipated being able to buy the right over the childcare providers time. The flat rate paid to *Tagesmütter* in Rostock makes it more difficult to determine when their task of looking after children, whose parents are out to work, begins and ends. There may be expectations that the *Tagesmutter* has to be available according to parents' preferences. Almut

described a situation where a father insisted that she should look after his son, although she was officially on holiday.

> He said, I am going to bring Werner. You are the *Tagesmutter*. You have to be there. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Some of the English interviewees described parents who constantly brought their children earlier and collected them later than agreed, without paying for this extra time and without informing the childminder beforehand.

Interviewees in both countries expressed their annoyance with parents attempting to decide upon their working hours, as if parents employed them. Childminders, who charge by the hour or charge overtime, have at least an effective incentive at their disposal. *Tagesmütter* encounter greater difficulties in maintaining self-determination over their working day.

Providing formal childcare and education

Parenthood in both countries carries rights and duties. The Children Act 1989 prescribes parental responsibility, which cannot be surrendered or transferred, yet can be delegated. The German Basic Law establishes care and education of children as the natural right of parents and with it parents' primary responsibility for their children. Family day care providers have to accept primary parental rights and at the same time they have primary parental rights and duties towards their own children. With that childminders and *Tagesmütter* are positioned where formal rights meet informal care. When parents entrust somebody else with the care of their children for part of the day it becomes necessary to define what this care should entail. It includes finding a position on who can make claims on determining the day-to-day work of the family day care provider.

The book recommended by the NCMA for childminders and parents using childminders remains strangely fuzzy on this question. On one hand the authors recommend that all things have to be discussed and advise writing down certain habits of the children and expectations by parents (Hobart and Frankel 1999). Yet who makes decision in any concrete situation remains strangely obscure. For example mealtimes: decisions have to be made what and when children eat and rules surrounding mealtime. Are children

allowed to fill up their own plates and to feed themselves? Are they supposed to empty their plates and are there conditions attached to 'eligibility' for eating a dessert? The book recommended by the German *Tagesmütter* Association emphasises the need to work out expectations beforehand. Parents and *Tagesmütter* alike are invited to discuss examples of concrete situations and find out whether the style of parents and *Tagesmutter* are close and compatible (Kurth 1997)[17].

The government and policy makers obviously prefer not to be involved in this process. Since the *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* is in force (1990) *Tagesmütter* caring for less than four children, excluding their own, do not have to register with the *Jugendamt*, as long as they are not refunded with public money. This was intended to signal the acceptance of primary parental rights to make decision about and for their children. In England a consultation exercise on national standards for the regulation of day care proposes having different standards for childminders compared with other childcare settings. With parental approval childminders are allowed to smack children in their care and are allowed to smoke in the presence of even young babies. "As childminding is a more informal setting the Government shouldn't have to regulate on what people can and can't do in their own homes"(Department for Education and Employment 2000e).

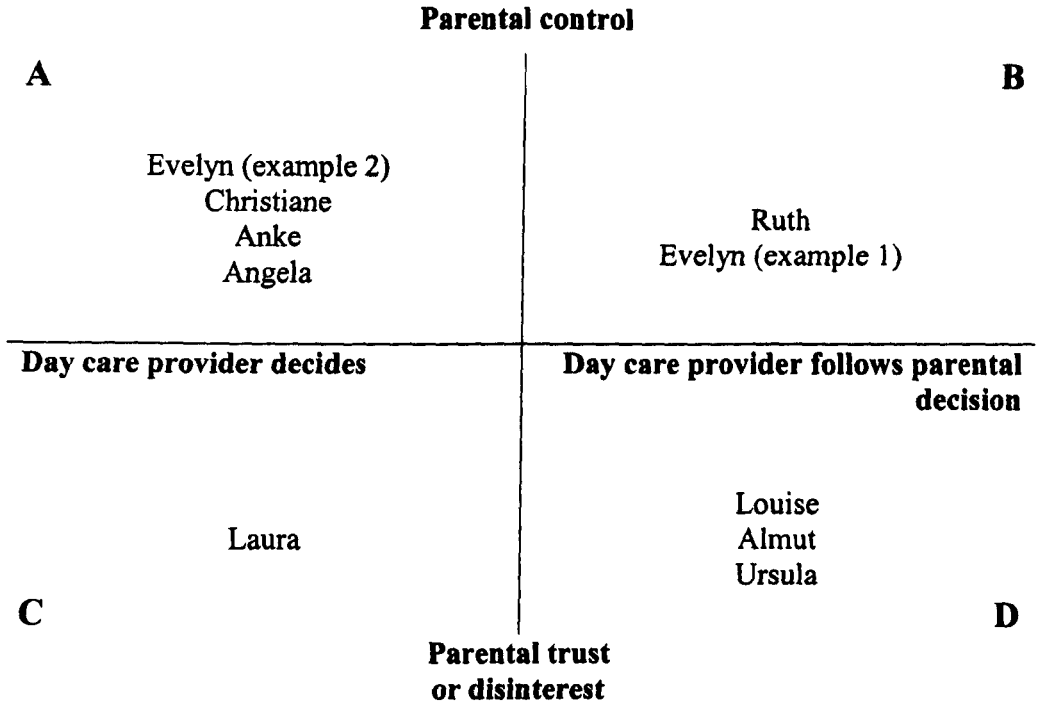
We have seen in Chapter 5 that childminders and *Tagesmütter* do not really know what criteria parents view as important when deciding to go ahead with one family day care provider and not with another. Some women assumed that parents chose childcare that comes close to their own practices and preferences. Yet it is the family day care provider who establishes the environment for minding children and sets up activities. Then parents may be seen as being able to decide if that is what they envisage for their children.

> When the woman comes to see you to leave her children with you, she wants to know, how you got to get on with the children, what kind of play-things you do and that type of thing. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Contracts can, as the English questionnaire showed, contain agreements for example about the use of out-door toys, attendance at parent-and-toddler groups and actions in order to manage the behaviour of children. Yet caring for a child entails a multitude of situations where decisions have to be made. Everyday situations force the family day care provider to reflect upon whether the appropriate action is based on her own understanding

of childcare or whether she has to comply with parents' ideas. A position between two extremes has to be found. One extreme is that the childminder or *Tagesmutter* complies with all the wishes and expectations expressed by parents. This requires that family day care providers know what parents expect. Parents may be perceived as striving to control their children's day-to-day life at the family day care provider, as trusting the childminder or *Tagesmutter* in taking the right decisions or as disinterested. The other extreme is that family day care providers claim the authority to take decisions independently from parents, based on knowledge gained from their own experience as mothers, from experience as family day care providers or from childcare training. Figure 7.3 offers a model of the extreme positions within which family day care providers make childcare decisions. The positions found between these two extremes of who is seen as competent or in the rightful position to decide on childcare questions may vary according to the issues concerned and may change over time. Each position the family day care provider takes will be met by parents' approach to the kind of service they expect and the level of their involvement. These decisions may be further complicated when there are children present where more than one set of parents – including the family day care provider – can make claims on the 'right' approach. The names of the family day care providers are of the women offering examples of decision making illustrating each of the cells below. Although childminders and *Tagesmütter* appear to have general ideas about their competence of decision-making and parental rights overall here we are interested in the more particular, concrete situations. The analysis of family day care providers' description of decision making showed that a family day care provider positions herself in a different cell, when, for example, a decision about the use of other childcare facilities is due compared to a position taken when deciding upon food offered to children.

Figure 7.3: The structure of childcare decisions



When family day care providers perceive parents' position between trust and control similar to their own expectations (cells B and C) the potential for conflict is minimal. An example for the cell C is Laura. Laura spends time and energy on producing flash cards and teaching the two-year-old child in her care to read, as she taught her own daughters to read before school age.

> Her parents are over the moon that she is, you know, doing this. They think it is absolutely brilliant. And she actually said on the report that she gives Social Services[18], that she felt her daughter got a better one-to-one than she gets at home. Because I do spend, you know, such quality time on them. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Examples in cell B are found concerning food and other childcare activities. In Chapter 6 we have seen the problems Ruth has to adhere to parents' wishes concerning the consumption of biscuits in the afternoon. Parents may insist on certain practices and, family day care providers may view parents' wishes as crucial, as Ruth did. Ruth's dilemma was that when she gave her son a biscuit (to keep him going until the next meal) she could not give the minded child a biscuit, too. She feared to go against the parents'

wish of not spoiling the appetite for the joint meal at home. Evelyn felt that it was up to the parents whether the child would visit a playgroup. She was prepared to take her daughter to the playgroup and look after the minded child if the parents disapproved of attending the playgroup.

Conflicts arise when parents and family day care providers have different views about their control over the childcare offered. Cell A contains conflicts where, according to the interviewees, both the family day care provider and the parents feel they have the authority to take decisions. They range from a disagreement about how to dress children, how to feed children, to when to start potty training. Evelyn insisted that she would not allow the child in her care to eat peanuts although the parents felt that these nuts are good for children and the child would eat them at home[19]. Christiane would have liked to start potty training with one boy in her care. He is approaching is second birthday.

> At the moment I am slightly conflicting with one of my mothers over potty training. I would like to start. And she still would prefer to delay it a while. ... Well we found a compromise. We are waiting that Jörg shows this so-called unease. That he properly shows: I don't like this [concerning wet or full nappies]. He has to give a sign. That is what we have agreed. (Christiane, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

Family day care providers and parents are not always able to find a compromise. Sometimes family day care providers feel they have to comply with parents' demands on particular aspects on childcare, but still disagree.

> This mother was very concerned that he [her son] would wear a pom-pom hat in summer, because he was so delicate, allegedly. And she did not want to accept my advice, that that is the reason why he is so delicate. But that is her decision. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

This childcare arrangement ended in a bitter argument between *Tagesmutter* and mother.

Conflicts in cell D arise when family day care providers expect parents to explain what they want, but parents leave it up to the childminder or *Tagesmutter* to make decisions.

> I'll ask them if there is anything specific that they want me to do with them [the children]. But the ones I've childmind for is basically, like, whatever you say, I agree with, you know. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

Another, similar source of conflict occurs when parents wish to control the daily experience of their child at the family day care provider, as the concerned father was reported to do, but show disinterest regarding the work of the *Tagesmutter*. Almut found it very difficult to accept the father's disregard for his child's progress:

> Werner was four years old when he joined us. He could not dress or undress himself, or eat by himself. I taught him to dress and undress within a month. I made a lot of time for this child. [One evening] as Werner was collected I said in front of the father, 'Isn't if fantastic how Werner can dress and undress himself?' – 'And, what's in it for me?' He said, in the presence of Werner, 'I could not do it at this age. And, did it harm me?' (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

The view that parents and family day care providers have to agree on ideas about child rearing practices not only affects the care offered by the childminder or *Tagesmutter* in their home. The expectations that parents and family day care provider have to pull in the same direction can result in the request that parents change their practices at home.

Ursula provided an example for a conflict situated in cell D. This *Tagesmutter* with no childcare training and very little work experience was confronted with the behaviour of a child that gave great cause of concern. Part of his behaviour was that he would pick his lips all the time until they started bleeding[20]. Her attempts to talk to the parents and find solutions were met by indifference.

> The parents only said, 'Yes he always did this' – answers like this. ... I tried to talk to the parents again, and said, he is always doing this. The parents said, uhm, what can you do. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

Although the child was able to stop some of the alarming behaviour at the *Tagesmutter*, he continued to show it at home. Ursula felt that she was not able to help the child.

The English context of a relative shortage of childcare provision gives childminders better means to enforce parents' compliance to the childminder's idea of how to manage children's behaviour. The child in the next example is a three-year-old girl.

> She would tip over the table with food on it at lunchtime, and if I didn't get her a drink that instant, when I was seeing to another child, she just went crazy. And I kept saying, but I have to see to everybody. You can't just have me there for you. And I couldn't make her understand. So I turned to the parents and said, "look, I'm having problems. Can you help me sort of overcome it? And if we stick together and say, well this is what you do and you carry on at home, if she's behaving like this at home, and you know, she'll realise that everybody is treating her the same." And I wasn't getting that support. And I said, I was going to give her my notice, if they were not going to support me. And I said, you know, I'll see how it goes over the next month. And things didn't really change. So I said, that I'm not going to look after her anymore. And then they realised that I meant business and sort of supported me a lot more. So it never came to that. So we resolved the problem. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

Since parents were not interviewed, we don't know, how far Angela's demands of parents' behaviour management were realised in the home of the child. Other childminders reported a particular form of compromise. Childminder and parents agreed and explained to children, that at home and at the childminder different sets of rules operate. For example Evelyn refused to buy peanuts for a girl in her care or let her use the video by herself. In both cases she argued from health and safety reasons. The parents continued to give peanuts to their daughter and to let her use the video, arguing in terms of nutritional values and with children's need for independence.

The claim of competence becomes problematic when the role of mother is played off against the role of family day care provider. Earlier research has shown that some childminders felt resentment towards mothers, who, in their eyes, have 'abandoned' a healthy, delightful child in order to have a career (Bryant et al. 1980). The English interviews offered a watered down version. Some of the childminders presented

themselves as 'this sort of women' who are happy to be surrounded by children and care for them. They saw it as their (natural) role to care for children. None of the *Tagesmütter* forwarded any indication of such feelings.

This can provide the ground for conflicts of the kind as identified by German research of family day care. Family day care providers may feel themselves as the 'better mother'. (Erler 1996a)[21]. This can relate to the fact that the childminder or *Tagesmutter* stayed at home to be there for her own children or can concern the better care offered to the child.

> I get on well with Verena. The mother does not really get on well with Verena. She says often – unfortunately the mother often says, then adopt her – because she has such difficulties with her daughter. Yet these are difficulties the two of them have. I don't have them. And sometimes Verena truly fits in like my fourth, own child. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

Similarly Deborah's first encounter with one of the children she looked after for a long time was the scene of a conflict. This boy has now started secondary school and allegedly does not speak to any of his teachers.

> A four year old should not tell an adult to shut up. And his mum just laughed. So, that is where it is coming from. ... It took him a long time ... getting confidence in me. And now I think he talks to me more than he talks to his parents. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

Both these family day care providers identify a lack of parental skills and at the same time point out that they are able to provide adequate care for these children. This is different from family day care providers who know that they have the knowledge and skills to offer good care and education to children, but are also aware that their relationship to the children in their care differs from the relationship parents have with their children. A direct comparison of these relationships is not possible and these women don't feel the need to compete with parents.

By mapping agreements or disagreements between family day care providers and parents onto a model of structures of childcare decisions it become apparent that these processes can become highly charged. It requires family day care providers and parents to reflect on

personal behaviour and values and, ideally, both parties to exchange their views. This represents difficult situations for childminders, *Tagesmütter* and parents heightened by the emotionally charged context of entrusting another person with the care of a young child (Ferri 1992; Kurth 1997). What can family day care providers do to alleviate possible tensions and to support constructive communication?

> [It is important] to be *friendly* with parents. You don't always become friends. But you can become friendly. And I think that it is very important that you are able to talk to parents. And that you are friends in case there is a problem with the child. Because, at least you feel as if you can go to the parents and say, look, you know the child has done this and that and the other. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

> I am very open with parents. I tell them when a child had been naughty and I had to scold the child. ... When they where a bit younger, when they touched the cooker, then their little fingers were smacked a little bit. I told parents this, because you must not slap a child. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

These two quotes show that two aspects, openness and truthfulness are essential from the perspective of the childminder or *Tagesmutter*. They must find a way to talk about a child's behaviour without offending parents and to avoid triggering defensive reactions. Moreover, they have to find a way to report their own actions or accidents to parents which may meet disapproval or disappointment.

> I do not conceal anything. For example, once the little one fell down the stairs. And I do not conceal anything. I am open and honest. And nothing has been said. Well, that could have happened to me, too, was forwarded by the mother. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

Although some interviewed family day care providers explained that it was sometimes rather difficult to be open and honest in the end it seems to pay by building up mutual trust. Interestingly some of the *Tagesmütter* referred to their ability to create an

atmosphere of openness and trust as a professional: "just as you would work in a kindergarten" (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years).

Decisions on daily practices and behaviour management are also based on openness and honesty. Both the family day care provider and the parents have to express their position and, if necessary, come to and stick by a compromise. The interviews showed that arrangements breaking down all had an element of concealed disagreement or disapproval. This could have been an expectation by parents, although fulfilled by the family day care provider but disapproved of, or it could be childcare practices parents did not like but did not discuss.

It appears to be general practice in both countries to urge parents to be open and honest and to reassure parents that one can take (justified) criticism and discuss any problem. The descriptions of the problems above and of childcare arrangements breaking down suggest limited success of these appeals. Something different is needed.

> Like Linda came in the other morning and just threw the child – not literally – said, take him. He had me up all night and he has been so grumpy and you know. And because she feels safe to do that, and she knows he is going to be absolutely fine, then it is fine. But that is a friendship type of relationship. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Family day care providers want to know when a child has had a bad night, does not feel well or similar information. Yet, the above quote shows that, when the relationship is right, parents forward their emotions, but only if they feel safe to do so. For Liz a successful relationship with this mother appears to include looking after the parents, too, and being friendly with. It is here where the service provided for parents may turn into care as defined by Bubeck (1995). Listening to a parent and talking about the child is an activity the parent cannot provide by herself. This dimension of the childcare triangle challenges the boundaries drawn by the family day care provider, too and questions what does childcare includes.

Developing over time

Openness and honesty, the basis of trust can only develop over time. Reliability has to be proven over time. How much of business negotiations are necessary with individual

parents also cannot be predicted. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* form an opinion how best to start with parents. The first meeting, taking place in the family day care provider's home is crucial.

> They can form an impression of me, of my home. And when the parents have the feeling that they and their children are in good hands here, then this is in principle the first step. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

> If you don't have the feeling, instantly, that you get on with the parents, then I say I steer clear of it. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

For the German interviewees the beginning of a successful relationship was a mutual positive feeling towards each other. This was usually followed by a thorough exchange of ideas about childrearing. However, this had to be cut short, in cases where parents were desperate for instant childcare. The starting point childcare issues taken by *Tagesmütter* and parents contrasts to the ideas childminders have about how to set up a positive relationship. Childminders were more likely to emphasise the necessity for a very formal start. Several interviewees illustrated how carefully they developed the business side of an agreement, making sure that both parties were fully aware of all the ins and outs. This formed an essential base one could return to if necessary.

> Well initially, when you start with a new parent, you have to be very formal. You make sure you have a contract. And everything is stipulated on the contract. ... Obviously the longer you work for somebody, the more the professional side drops and the friendship builds up. I think that is just natural. But if there was ever a problem, it would always be, go back to the contract, see what this is, see how we discussed it. ... But not the same sort of friendship that you would build with somebody, uhm, who wasn't related to your job. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

All of the interviewed family day care providers had to contemplate how much friendship or friendliness on the one hand and on the other hand how much distance was beneficial. Friendship helps to make parents feeling at ease, yet there were some dangers. One is that

a close relationship with parents may prevent the family day care provider talking openly about any negative behaviour of the child. The other one is that a friendship may invite being less guarded and saying things one regrets later on.

> It does not really have to be friendship. ... I get on well with my parents. Sometimes we party together. But I can't say I have a real friendship with parents, because, well, they continue to be parents using the service, somehow. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

German language and custom provide the possibility to express distance or friendship in the form of addressing people[22]. Some of the *Tagesmütter* insists on using the formal '*Sie*'.

> I call all parents '*Sie*'. Yes, yes, as you do in kindergarten, exactly the same principle. ... "A nice friendly relationship with parents, I think that is very important. ... I would not strive for a deep friendship in order to build up a circle of friends. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Almut is very clear about separating her work as *Tagesmutter* and her relationships with parents from her personal circle of friends. Yet, it is not entirely up to the family day care provider how the relationship develops. Monika described a confusing situation where parents insisted on changing to the informal way of addressing each other. In the end she felt she had to give in but since then she feels slightly uncomfortable.

Yet quite the opposite situation can occur. Deborah provides an example of wishing to befriend parents beyond her tasks as childminder.

> A lot of parents just want to keep it on a professional idea where, you know, you are looking after them. You know, you tell them what they have done during the day. They pay your wages. And that is all they want to know, you know. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

Conclusion

The successful provision of childcare services to parents depends on how well a relationship with parents can be developed suitable to cover the three aspects of arrangements. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* have to balance their ability to maintain their micro business, their commitment to support mothers in their working role, and their skills of looking after children. The relationship between childminder or *Tagesmutter* and parent depends on a variety of qualities. They include clarity of what kind of service is delivered for how much pay, flexibility and reliability, and the need to find a balance between control and trust. The result is that family day care providers constantly walk the tightrope between friendship and distance and the possibilities of taking a wrong step are numerous.

It is impossible to know beforehand what kind of relationship parents expect or strive for. Openness, good communication skills and reflexivity can pre-empt possible controversy. *Tagesmütter* with childcare training and the experience of working in a day centre have a reference frame of how to relate to the parents of children in their care.

The problem of keeping a balance is aggravated by the existence of many assumptions: assumptions about why parents go out to work and why they choose family day care, assumptions about the need to earn money or the worth of childcare work, assumptions about what good quality childcare is and what parents' responsibility in the context of formal childcare entails. They are the same assumptions about the rights, duties and needs of parents and children underlying emotionally charged discussions about single mothers or child related benefits, for example.

An attempt to unravel these assumptions and to formulate possible expectations by the involved adults quickly touches emotions and beliefs. Particularly the aspect of childcare arrangements, decisions about pedagogic content and daily practices has the potential for disagreement and conflict. This has several underlying reasons. Conflicts can arise when mothering is used as model for childcare, because it cannot solve the question of competence and quickly leads to the question of who is the better mother. To model childcare on mothering may work better in relation to the child, but does not extend to the parents. Another question is whether it is the family day care provider who can claim the power to decide, because it is her home or whether she has to do what parents expect, because they hold parental responsibility for the child and pay can lead to bitter conflicts.

This possible conflict becomes more prominent when the childminder or *Tagesmutter* provides formal and informal care at the same time. Then the family day care provider may have to decide whether to treat children differently, her own children according to her ideas of child rearing and the minded children according to parents' expectation. This may be very difficult to maintain. When all children are treated the same, a decision has to be made along which lines.

A successful pedagogical co-operation between family day care providers and parents depends on a rather different relationship than having a good business relationship. For the former, the most important qualities are openness, truthfulness and trust. A relationship built on these qualities depends on reciprocity. The childcare triangle of family day care provider, parent and child can result in that the childminder or *Tagesmutter* is looking after the parent, too.

Another complication of the three aspects of childcare arrangements, affecting possible conflicts and suitable forms of relationships is that three parties are involved. A businesslike manner of the family day care provider may be appreciated by the parent concerning the business side, yet caring for children involves other qualities. Parents may perceive a childminder or *Tagesmutter* being 'too friendly' as an expectation of friendship they did not wish. Family day care providers who offer extensive flexibility and understanding of parents and the complexity of their daily schedules are also in danger of being exploited. The complexity of forming relationships is expressed in the varying ways the label 'professional' is used by childminders and *Tagesmütter*. It can mean to put aside a personal opinion, for example about mothers' employment. It can be used to express a businesslike approach concerning the arrangements. 'Professional' can stand for good quality childcare or for the achieved balance of friendship and distance in relation to the parents.

Reducing the financial aspect of childcare arrangements to the negotiation of mainly food money, overtime and overtime pay appears to lessen the difficulties of walking the tightrope. Most interviewed *Tagesmütter* did not describe their initial relationship as driven by a businesslike approach. How the relationship with the mother felt was instantly important and could be contemplated before the contract was signed. This offers an opportunity to reduce one of the factors contributing to a premature breakdown of childcare arrangements. Policy makers in England could contribute a stabilising effect by subsidizing childcare at the point of provision and in effect fixing the rate paid for

childminding. Childcare Tax Credit (CCTC) as part of the Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC)[23], paid to parents does not provide this stabilizing effect. It is intended to make childcare affordable to working parents but does not eliminate the need to negotiate charges. CCTC does not provide income security for childminders. The intended use of childcare, which forms the base of eligibility of CCTC, does not take the form of a binding contract for parents. Also, subsidising childcare costs through parents pay package does not guarantee that this money is paid to the childcare provider.

Conflicts between family day care provider and parents can critically threaten the childcare arrangement. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* attach great importance to their relationship with parents. Conflicts with parents are perceived as very stressful. The ultimate means to exert pressure on the conflict is the suggestion to terminate the arrangement. The different contexts of childcare provision and policies in the two locations resulted in a contrasting power balance. In England the shortage of childcare places available to parents rendered the threat of ending the arrangements as a useful tool to underpin demands of the childminder. In Germany parents had the option of choosing other childcare facilities, when they disagreed with their *Tagesmutter* and *Tagesmütter* were well aware of this. Although in both countries childminders and *Tagesmütter* were concerned about the children's well-being and children's need for continuity this was often not enough to maintain childcare arrangements when conflicts with parents could not be settled.

The benefits of using contracts to avoid conflicts and as a means to indicate which areas have to be discussed before childcare arrangements are agreed can be extended to the more delicate issues of childcare. Family day care providers could have a list, perhaps attached to the contract form, containing childcare issues that in the past have proven to be more controversial. This could include behaviour management, toilet training, sweets, television, conflicts among children, etc.

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* are bound to reflect on their own values and practices when offering childcare services to other parents and care for other people's children. They may have to or wish to change their own practices and unavoidably it will impact on their own family. The effect of family day care on the provider's family is the focus of the next chapter.

[1] The British legislation explicitly names 'experience with children' as pre-condition.

[2] Attendance and meal lists in a kindergarten have, of course, additional or other functions. They provide the basis for organisation and planning, on different levels. On the highest level they are used to plan childcare provision and financing kindergartens, including setting parent's contribution. On the medium level they are the basis for, e.g. staff rotas and food purchase. On the level of daily routines they may be used to plan activities.

[3] It was assumed that essential information about the name and address of childminder and parents, the name of the child and contact telephone numbers are included.

[4] Six the 163 active childminders did not have a contract at all, and therefore did not cover any of those items.

[5] Each local authority has either forms for contracts, uses the contract form developed by the NCMA or recommends the items to be covered in a contract. However, ultimately the childminder (and the parents) decide if a contract is drawn up and the content of it. Some items, that are part of the contract show differences of contracts in the four local authorities. The item "Agreement regarding the use of out-door toys" is covered by just over half of all childminders in Sunderland but only by just below 10 per cent of the childminders in the remaining three local authorities. Sunderland's childminders are less likely to cover the provision of meals in their contract (49 per cent) than childminders in the remaining local authorities (88 per cent). Similar proportions occur for the items "payment during childminder's annual holiday" and a review date.

[6] To some extent the questionnaire itself may have encouraged this particular use of 'professional'. It is question no.38 (Appendix 5). Childminders came to this section after they had answered many questions about their contracts. Yet the correlation between the variables 'I am a childcare professional' and the variable concerning the wish to have a professional relationship with parents show that childminders use the attribute in connection to their work with children. When I designed the section on childminders' attitudes (question 27 – 46) it was important to have a good mixture of possibilities, allowing portraying oneself as 'loving children', 'extending the family', 'enjoying the business side' or 'feeling as a childcare professional'. These statements were lifted from interviews with childminders in Gateshead (Gelder 1997).

[7] *Tagesmütter* not receiving a refund by the *Jugendamt* are not obliged to draw up a contract with parents. However, the German *Tagesmütter* Association emphasises the security that can be derived by parents and *Tagesmütter* from having contracts.

[8] This period of notice fits in with the *Jugendamt's* organisation of paying the subsidy to *Tagesmütter*.

[9] Some *Tagesmütter* stated that they inform parents about their holidays at the beginning of the calendar year. Therefore parents have enough time to look for other solutions. However, there may be new children on the roll. It may feel inappropriate to claim ones right to holidays.

[10] Only one of the interviewed *Tagesmütter* reported the failure of one of the mothers to apply for the refund by the *Jugendamt*. This becomes necessary when the child turns three. The conflict concerned the mother's idea that the child would continue to attend while she was paying her 30 per cent contribution and the *Tagesmutter* would receive the refund backdated when the application went through. The *Tagesmutter* refused to agree to this arrangement. A compromise could not be found and the childcare arrangement was terminated.

[11] The study of children and minders in Oxfordshire in the 1970s seems to have found only children at childminders whose mothers are out to work (Bryant et al. 1980). The authors did not state it explicitly. However, one subheading of the chapter 'who were the minders and mothers?' reads 'Why mind? Why go out to work?' There is no mother mentioned who was not in paid employment. Research looking into parents' preferences for or choice of childcare, or into the financial implications of using childcare have sampled only working mothers (Thomson 1995; Finlayson et al. 1996).

[12] The study was based on a random sample of children under eight years old in England. Of 3,243 children under eight 1,766 lived in households with a non-working mother.

[13] It appears that childminders looking after children placed and paid for by their Local Authority are over-represented. Children placed and paid for by their Local Authority took up less than one per cent of the registered places at childminders in Durham and just three per cent of registered places in Gateshead (Department for Education and Employment 1999a). Additionally sponsored day care schemes, including the use of childminders by local authorities to provide care for children in 'need' has developed over the past five to ten years towards a crisis intervention service, short-time and part-time, which is withdrawn when temporary crisis is solved (Statham et al. 2000).

[14] This stands in contrast to services that are perceived to benefit all children and their development. For example Britain strives to offer free nursery places to all four year olds and extend this service to three year olds. In Germany children have a right to a kindergarten place. These places are subsidised to a certain extent. However, the contribution payable by parents may be means tested. See also Chapter 3.

[15] This has changed since when the research was undertaken. Since December 1999 parents have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with family emergencies involving a dependant (Williams and Phillips 2000).

[16] The consequence for children when arrangements are hastily set up is that they loose out on a settling in period. This may be very difficult for children to cope with and may have knock-on effects on the family day care provider and the parents.

[17] It is acknowledged that it may be quite difficult to formulate one's ideas about childrearing. Kurth suggest that *Tagesmutter* and parents think about following themes: When and how do you praise a child? When and how do you punish? Are you rather strict or rather supportive? How do you talk to your child? What do you think about threatening? One of the most important areas where parents and *Tagesmutter* have to agree are toilet training, sweets and television (Kurth 1997).

[18] This Local Authority is interested in parents' satisfaction with childminding and has just introduced questionnaires for parents. Why Laura had seen this 'report' is not quite clear. However, this Local Authority had introduced another measure to monitor parents' satisfaction with childminders. When signing the contract parents are to receive a form they are supposed to fill in when childcare arrangements end. Laura did not know whether parents should send this form directly to Social Services or give it to the childminder.

[19] Evelyn follows safety guidance. Peanuts are perceived to be a choking hazard.

[20] In the interest of anonymity I refrain from any further description of this child's behaviour. However, I would like to emphasise that Ursula's portrait of this child gives reason of great concern for his well-being and development.

[21] These feelings may correspond with parents' fears that children will not recognise them again, or accept them as main carers (e.g. Erler 1996a; Hobart and Frankel 1999).

[22] The formal *Sie* is used for adult strangers or until a mutual decision is made to change to the informal way to address each other. Until then the title and the surname is used. The informal *du* is connected to the use of the first name.

[23] Depending on the household income working parents can receive up to 70 per cent of their childcare cost if they use registered childcare. However, when introduced in October 2000 eligible childcare costs were restricted to of £100 for one child or £150 for two or more children (Rake 2001). The maximum of eligible childcare costs has been increased to £135 for one child and £200 for two or more children per week (Inland Revenue 2001).

Chapter 8: Extending the family: Home or workplace?

Family day care is praised as care in a family atmosphere. It is perceived to come closest to mothering, at least to its positive connotations, and is seen as beneficial for young children. One important characteristic of family day care is that it is located in private homes. With other people's children coming through the door of the family day care provider's home a new task enters the household. This may be very similar to an existing task – the care for the family's children. In contrast to the informal care of their own children, family day care is formal and delivered through a business relationship, and additionally public regulations and/or public money are involved.

The location of family day care implies that other household members are involved. In literature for prospective family day care providers or parents thinking of using this service it is pointed out that everybody in the family will be affected. (Kurth 1997; Hobart and Frankel 1999). It has to be assumed that husbands agree to their partner working as a childminder or *Tagesmutter* and that their home or part of it, be used for this purpose. The German literature is more explicit than the British about how family day care may affect the other members of the household of the *Tagesmutter*. For example, it will create more housework and the care for all children will demand more time. This both leaves the *Tagesmutter* with less time for her own family and restricts her leisure time. Children looked after in family day care are more than guests but less than family members (Kurth 1997, p. 43). The prospective *Tagesmutter* and her partner have to be certain that they are able to provide the necessary space and time (Kurth 1997). Blüml (1996) lists possible causes for dysfunctional family day care systems. It suggests that partners of *Tagesmütter* may feel that the family systems becomes destabilized and that their role (as father and husband) is undermined. For example, husbands may discover that they are expected to extend the care of their own children when *Tagesmütter* are attending training courses or meetings. Other potential conflicts arise when children of the family may fear that their position is threatened, and out of jealousy developed among children resulting in aggressive behaviour and (Blüml 1996; Schumann 1996). However, although the effects on other household members and the role they play in family day care is acknowledged, there seem to be no attempts to involve anyone other than the family day care provider in training or induction programmes (Ferri 1992; Schumann 1996)[1].

This chapter explores the effects of family day care on other members of the household in which the care of other people's children takes place. To look at this issue at the level of the household is appropriate because the study is interested in the social and economic experience of family day care providers. It is within the household that childcare is 'produced', and the income earned from family day care may benefit all members of the household. If the new task of family day care provision creates more work we need to explore whether old, very similar tasks find new teams or whether new tasks are simply absorbed by the old teams. In Chapter 7 we have seen that it is not easy either for family day care providers to set boundaries between their formal and their informal work or between their formal and their informal role. This chapter will extend that theme further to consider how other household members negotiate boundaries between their private life and their involvement in public care. Concerning the relationship between family day care provider and looked-after child we came across the descriptive labels of kinship (Chapter 7). However, they could not be extended to the members of the minded child's family. It is obvious that through family day care no new kinship relations are created. However, a closer look at kinship labels used to describe relationships may lead to a better understanding of the meaning attached to the emerging relationships.

The chapter begins by looking at the changes brought about in members of a household when other children are temporarily included. Subsequently the effects of family day care provision on the husband and children of the family day care provider are explored. The involvement of other household members takes place on several levels and individual members are affected in different ways. The chapter considers how taking on other people's children affects domestic space and changes its private nature as protected from intervention. Further, the relationships husbands and children may develop with the children being looked after in their home are investigated. Additionally having a wife or a mother working in family day care may change expectations and practices of the division of domestic labour. The last aspect that will be examined is the financial impact of family day care on the household.

The impact of family day care on internal and external relationships

In both countries the family day care providers' own children were usually older than the children in their care. Figure 8.1 and Figure 8.2 show the impact family day care has on the age composition of people present on a day-to-day basis in the family day care provider's household. The pictures that emerge are very similar in both countries. There were only 15 households of active childminders and *Tagesmütter* (8 per cent), which did not include children. Five family day care providers had no children of their own and in 10 households the children had left. The youngest own child of childminders and *Tagesmütter* was eight years or older in 23 per cent of the households. There were only nine per cent of households with children under the age of three. When other people's children were included 96 per cent turned temporarily into 'households'[2] with children below the age of eight and 74 per cent of the households turned into a 'toddler household', where the youngest child was below the age of three.

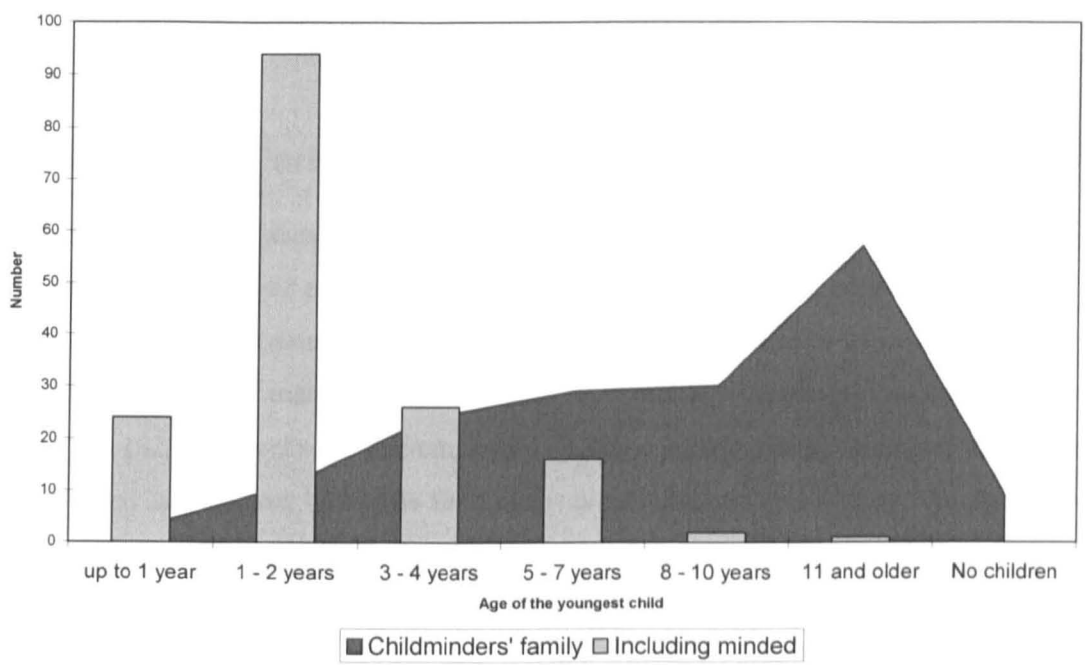
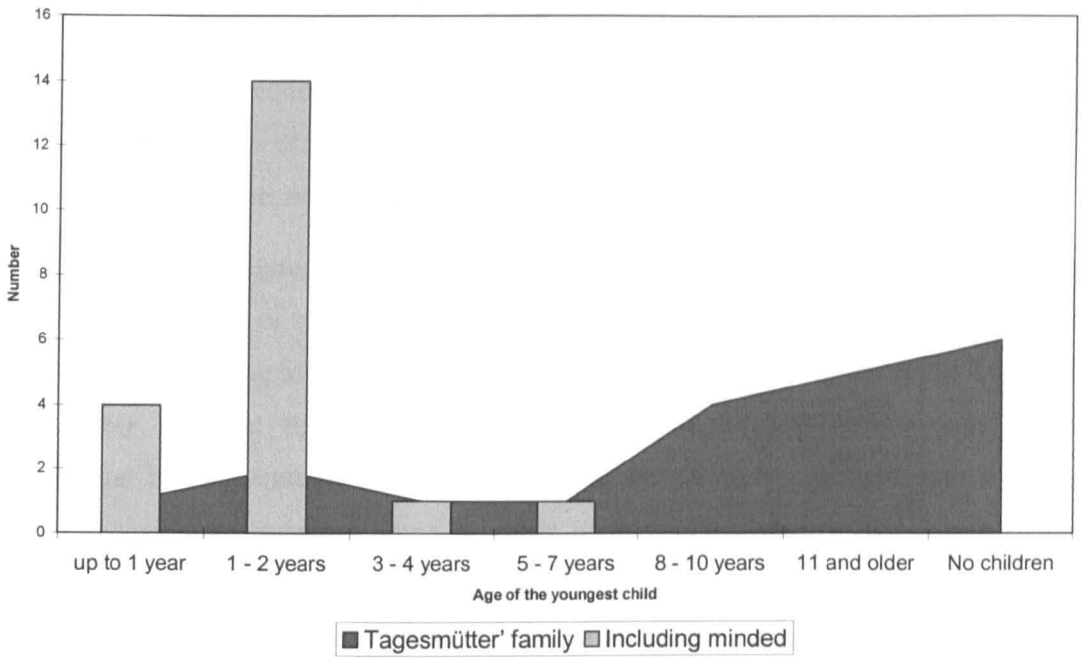


Figure 8.1: England: The transformation into a 'toddler household'

Figure 8.2: Germany: The transformation into a 'toddler household'



In both the English and the German samples 90 per cent of all family day care providers lived with their husband. None of the respondents' households included members other than a husband and/or children.

Husbands and Partners

Most family day care providers were married or lived with their partners[3]. In England 91 per cent (148) of the 163 active childminders were married or lived with their partner[4]. Of the 20 German respondents 18 lived with their husband or partner. Most husbands were active in the labour market. The majority of these 148 husbands in England were employed (82 per cent) or self-employed (13 per cent). Only three per cent were unemployed and of two husbands the data was missing. Of the German husbands two were unemployed (11 per cent), two were students (another 11 per cent) and another one was retired. Therefore 72 per cent of the husbands in Germany were employed or self-employed.

Overall childminders and *Tagesmütter* felt that their husbands accepted the use of the private home as public workplace (see Chapter 4). Particularly in England, due to legislation (Appendix 3) decisions on space used for or exempted from childminding have

to be taken before the first child arrives. However, at this point husbands in both countries had the opportunity to protect some of their private space.

> He only requests that the place where his computer is situated and where he can retreat to is excluded. That is the only thing. (Christiane, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 1/2 years)

Albeit the wide ranging approaches to which space to use and different practices implicate negotiation of space and its use; or, at least an adaptation by the childminder or *Tagesmutter* according to her partners feelings about the home.[5] For example, one of the *Tagesmütter*, who at the time of being interviewed worked jointly with another *Tagesmutter* in a separate part of the house stated that in the beginning it had been hard for her husband to open his home to other people. Other family day care providers explained, that turning the home into a workplace was not really a problem for their husbands. The statement that follows is typical of the reasons why this is so.

> I mean before he comes home I'm all tidy, I'm all toys put away. Everything is done. And even if I still had children at that particular time of the night, I would still be tidy. Because when he comes in its mealtime. And as I did with my Thomas, you sit and you read or you sit and watch the television then, when I am on the meal. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

There was only one childminder whose husband was unhappy. His concerns were about the increase of wear and tear and the more frequent need to decorate the house. Nevertheless, the description of an overall harmonious acceptance of family day care in their home by family members has to be treated cautiously, since husbands and children were not interviewed. Sullivan's (2000) research on households of teleworkers shows that the perception of conflicts over space differs between teleworker and their partner or child. Teleworkers perceived problems arising out of the space used for homeworking as less salient than household members

Husbands in England

The questionnaires in both countries asked family day care providers whether their husband supported their work as childminder or *Tagesmutter* and supplied a list of

activities. Table 8.1 shows how husbands supported their wives in their work as a childminder.

Table 8.1: Forms of support offered by husband

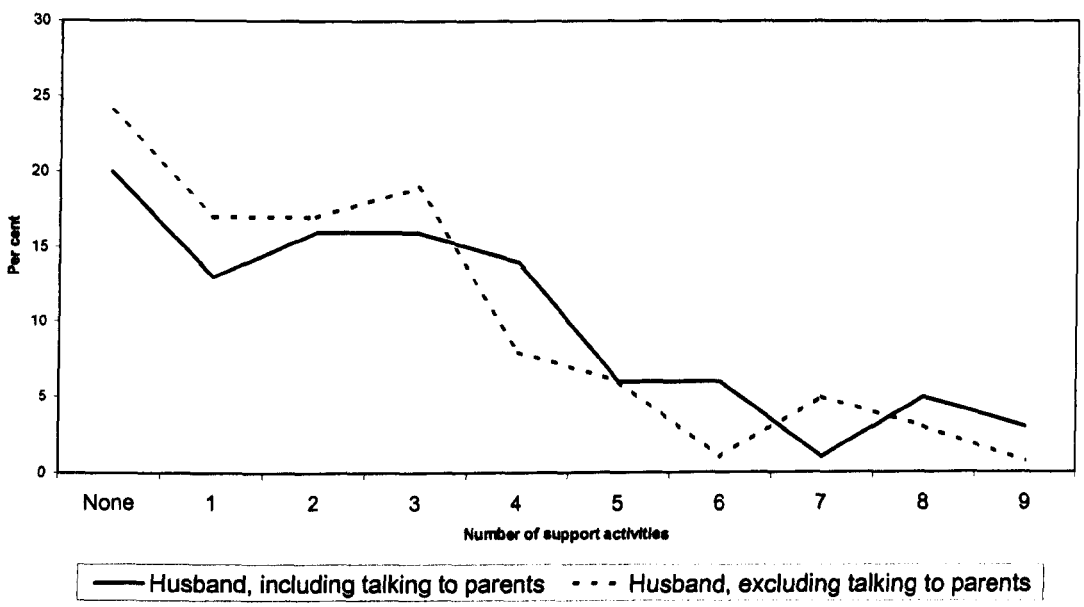
Activity of husband or partner	Childminders confirming statement (N = 146) N	Childminders confirming statement %
Plays with minded child	77	53
Talks to parents of the minded child	77	53
Helps taking children out	52	36
Comforts minded child	45	31
Looks after own children more often	43	30
Does more housework	38	26
Does more shopping	30	22
Cooks more often	27	19
Feeds minded child	21	15
Keeps the books	13	9
Offers other support	12	8

Table 8.1 shows, that men were more likely to show support by becoming more involved with children, both those that are minded and their own, than by increasing their contribution to domestic work. Although this table is not able to answer questions about the volume of support listed in each of the categories it does indicate that husbands and partners are involved and that husbands' domestic activities change as a consequence of wives taking up family day care[6]. At the same time the form and the extent of husbands' involvement in the provision of family day care shapes the experience of children and their parents making use of this service.

Ten of the types of support (excluding 'other support') were used to create a scale of spouse support (Figure 8.3). Twenty-nine husbands (20 per cent of 146 men) did not offer support at all and had not increased their contribution to domestic work since their wives/partners had started to work as a family day care provider. The mean score on the scale was 2.9 with a median of 3 when 'talking to parents' was included. When the item

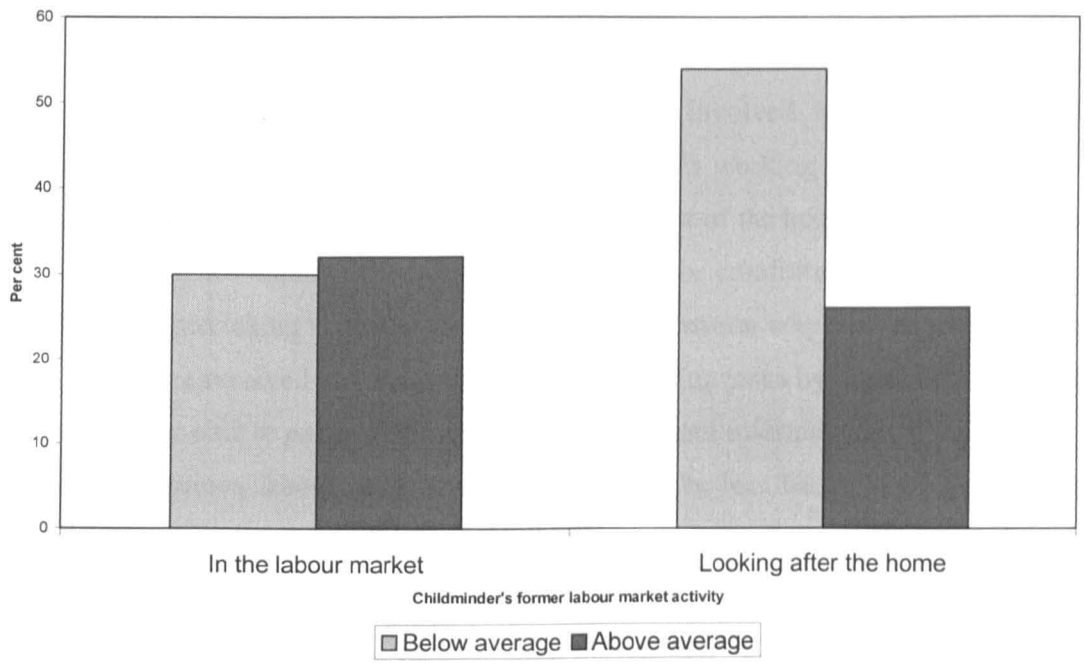
'talks to parents of the minded child' was taken out of the scale 35 husbands or partners (24 per cent) did not change their contribution to the work in their home. The mean dropped to 2.37 and the median to 2. The reason for excluding 'talking to parents' from the scale of support was that the interviews showed that when husbands talked to the parents of the minded children it used to be about cars, work or other non-childcare related topics.

Figure 8.3: Scale of support by husbands, including and excluding 'talking to parents'.



A division of the husbands in the scale into 'above average support' and 'below average support' allowed further analysis of the questionnaire data. In looking for explanations why some partners help more than others, two significant relationships were found. The first connected the support offered by husbands to the employment history of the childminder ($p < 0.05$). Fifty-two per cent of 62 childminders who had been in the labour market before they offered family day care enjoyed above average support from their husbands. This proportion dropped to 33 per cent where the childminder ($N = 80$) had been looking after the home before taking on other people's children ($p < 0.05$) (Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.4: Support by husband by childminder formerly in the labour market or the home



A closer look at the ways in which husbands supported childminders who had previously been in the labour market before showed that the increase mainly concerned activities with the minded children (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2: The influence of women's work before becoming a childminder on the support offered by her husband

Activity	Proportion of husbands where the wife had been previously in the labour market %	Proportion of husbands where the wife had previously been looking after the home %	p
Playing with minded children	68	41	<0.01
Comforting minded children	40	25	<0.05
Helping to take minded children out	45	28	<0.05

Other relationships between the childminder's previous employment history and a change in activities of her husband were not found. Whether women had left the labour market to

become a childminder or whether they had been looking after the home and caring for children before did not influence the amount of childcare for their own children that was undertaken by husbands, nor the amount of other domestic work, like cooking, shopping and housework in general. Additionally, the search for further relationships which might explain why husbands were more likely to become involved with children was not conclusive. Neither the length of the husband's/partner's working week, nor the number of children on the roll of the childminder, nor the number of the household's own children seemed to influence whether the husband played with or comforted minded children, or whether he helped taking children out. A possible explanation why women who had been employed before received more support with childminding tasks by their husbands is that they were better able to portray their work as separate from informal care. If childminding did replace previous labour market work then it may be less likely to be perceived as 'just' another child or other children in the family – a task the housewife and mother was able to cope with.

However, a second relationship was revealed by the data from the questionnaires: that between the involvement of husbands in setting up childcare arrangements and the support they offered. Husbands who had always or usually met the minded children and their parents before the contract was signed were more likely to offer more than average assistance to their wives or partners. Just over half of the husbands (53 per cent) who had met parents and the 54 per cent of those who had met the children initially offered support above the average[7]. When they had not met parents before a decision was made to go ahead with the childcare arrangements the proportion of husbands who offered above average support dropped to 28 per cent ($p < 0.01$). When they had not met the children it dropped to 23 per cent ($p < 0.001$). These findings are similar to a study that surveyed *Tagesmütter* and their partners. When partners were involved in the settling in period they were more likely to engage in household tasks and to look after own and minded children, at least sometimes (Wingerter 1995). Yet it can be assumed that fathers who enjoy activities with their own children and perform unpaid domestic labour may be more likely to show an interest in other people's children and their wife's work.

Husbands in Rostock

The questionnaire returned by German *Tagesmütter* contained the same list of activities as the English questionnaire (Table 8.3). Of the 20 respondents 18 lived with their husband or partner.

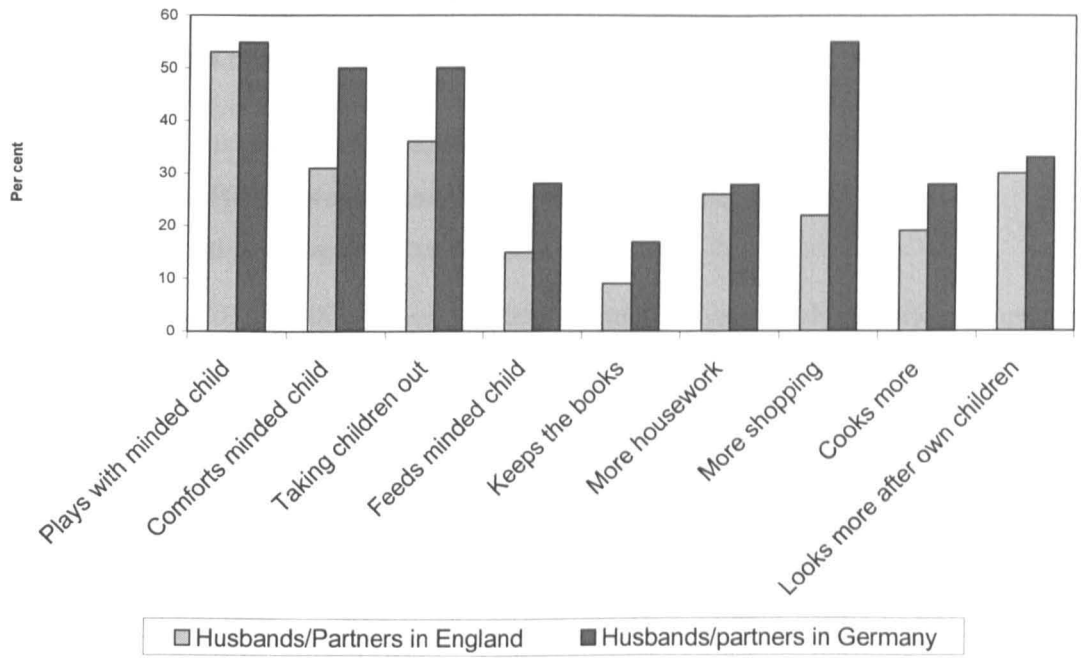
Table 8.3: Support activities by German husbands

Activity of husband or partner of	Childminders confirming statement N	Childminders confirming statement %
Plays with minded child	10	55
Does more shopping	10	55
Helps taking children out	9	50
Comforts minded child	9	50
Looks after own children more often	6	33
Does more housework	5	28
Cooks more often	5	28
Feeds minded child	5	28
Talks to parents of the minded child	3	17
Keeps the books	3	17
Offers other support	1	6

The small sample of the households of *Tagesmütter* does not allow an exploration of the relationship with other data collected with the questionnaire.

A comparison of support activities of English and German husbands shows that *Tagesmütter* have partners who are more involved in their work with children and contribute more to domestic labour than childminders[8] (Figure 8.5).

Figure 8.5: Proportions of support activities by English and German husbands



Husbands in both countries have in common that they are more likely to show support by becoming involved with minded children than to increase the amount of domestic work, including care for their own children. This, however, should not be mistaken for an indication that husbands are offering more childcare work for other people's children than they contribute to the domestic labour in their household The questionnaire asked about changed behaviour. Housework tasks were there before the minded children arrived. A husband who might appear not to do any more housework might have already taken on a considerable amount of domestic labour. If he had not changed his contribution in the eyes of the questionnaire respondent it would not be considered. Yet an involvement in family day care by a husband, however modest, is likely to find entrance in the support scale. The interviews in both countries provided further detail of husbands' involvement with the children in the care of childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

From 'almost like a daughter' to 'keeping a distance'

Husbands' opportunity to meet the minded children is commonly restricted by their working hours. The interviews showed that when husbands worked normal office hours they either did not meet the children at all or did so only for a very short period of time. In a few cases they just met the child who stayed longest. Husbands who worked shifts, or

were unemployed, or on long-term sick leave at least had the opportunity to become more involved with the caring work of their wives. Some family day care providers explained that their husbands enjoyed being included.

> My husband is enthusiastic about the children. He thinks it is good. He devotes a great deal of his time [to the children]. (Birgit, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Spending a lot of time with children can lead to positive relationships between husbands and minded children.

> She is just as likely to go up to him and ask him for things as she is for me, because she is used to him being there, you know. So he has quite a good relationship with them. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Observations made before, during, or after the interviews showed that husbands who did spend time with these children were able to build a warm and loving relationship. Here Peter, who is jointly registered with his wife in order to offer emergency care, talks about the child (eight months old) in their care.

> And Chloe, I mean Chloe is a lovely little thing. It's almost like having a daughter at home. And she is very affectionate. I actually quite, I think I'm quite lucky with her. ... I think, a lot [of] children either don't take to men or don't take to women at this particular age. And I'm actually very fortunate, because she hasn't really taken to many men. But I've just been away for two and a half weeks. And she came in in the morning and it was a big smile and she gave me something. I was really quite honoured. (Peter, jointly registered with Ruth, who has worked as a childminder 2 years)

Childcare can benefit and receive new facets when husbands take part in looking after other people's children. Husbands can make up for activities the family day care provider cannot or does not wish to offer.

> He works shifts, so sometimes he is here when I have got the children. And, uhm, they love him. I am playing more quieter games with the children. And he is a bit more rough and he'll tickle them and pin them down, like play-fighting and things like that. And they love it. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

> When Nathan had anything to do at the Cubs or the Scouts, if his granddad was not there, he used to come here and Fred [husband] used to show them what to do and how to do it. (Ivy, worked as a childminder 18 years)

According to their wives these men appear to model their approach to children in family day care on their role as father, or, depending on their age, their expected future role as grandfather. Sometimes a closer contact between the husband of a family day care provider and children is hampered, for example by medical reasons, or by the perception of be vulnerable to being accused of child abuse.

> He is just not always comfortable with tiny little ones. But I think that is the way that times have changed. He does not want to get too friendly with the children in case people read things into it. I think he is worried, you know. So he keeps his distance to a certain extent when the children arrive in the morning, without getting physical with them. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Being involved in family day care provided by their wives presupposes a general interest in and liking of children and does not appeal to all of the husbands of the interviewed family day care providers.

> He is one of the old school. I mean, he loves the children to death, but as long as he doesn't really have to do an awful lot with them. That's my own. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

> It has been like this in the past that he would help me when he was there. Well, but the past year – now when he is here he works outside. He can't help me here. That would be the last thing I

would expect. I can cope on my own. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Husbands' reluctance to join in the family day care work may chime with the family day care provider's approach to her work and an increased engagement with children in her care not expected. In both cases where two *Tagesmütter* worked jointly together in rooms separate from the family space, the husband's involvement with children diminished further[9].

Husbands and housework

The issue of whether and to what extent husbands contribute to the care of the children appears to be quite separate from the issue of domestic labour. Analysis of the questionnaires seems to indicate that women's work as a family day care provider per se has a limited potential to trigger any change of the distribution of domestic labour. In the context that in both countries housework continues to be seen as women's work, and is mainly undertaken by women (Künzler 1994; Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996a; Gershuny et al. 1996; Weidacher 1996; Laurie and Gershuny 2000) this is not surprising. Research on households where at least one of the adult members is working at home for pay, showed that the distribution of domestic labour stays more ore less the same (Baines and Wheelock 2000; Sullivan and Lewis 2001). Working at home is likely to confirm women's traditional gender identity (Huws and Korte 1990; Huws et al. 1996). Mothers working at home in childcare additionally seem to emphasise the 'mother' identity for childcare workers. Yet, as we have seen above, when family day care provision occurs as alternative to women's paid work outside the home and could be compared with previous experience of women in the labour market, men were more likely to change their behaviour and increase their contribution to domestic work.

The interviews were used to explore the extent of husband's participation in domestic labour and how it had developed. Using Wheelock's (1990) classification of the division of domestic labour the family day care providers' practices could best described as ranging from 'traditional rigid' to 'sharing'. Childminders appeared to take on the bulk of housework. As we saw in Chapter 6 family day care providers use the opportunity to squeeze in housework when children are occupied or at sleep. The interviews showed that many husbands did little and only engaged in certain tasks.

> Oh no [laughs]. He did not change. I continue to be alone on this one [laughs]. ... The way he helped before is how he is helping now. Nothing has really changed. Well, he helps here with the work, talks to the children and shows them things, his craftsman things. The children like that. (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

> Yes he usually does the shopping. That is because when the children have left I start to prepare the meal. Then I can't go shopping. He is doing it. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

Other family day care providers do not expect a greater contribution of domestic labour from their husbands as a result of their new self-employment. Asked whether her husband had changed his behaviour by increasing his share of domestic labour Christiane answered:

> No. It's not necessary. Not more than before. Nevertheless we do not have completely fixed roles. If there is something to be done he will lend a hand. That's how it is. (Christiane, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

The allocation of housework may not be fair in the sense that all necessary housework is undertaken equally. Sharing may just concern the work that is left to do when the husband returns from work. In the new *Länder* in Germany this can be seen as the logical continuation of the two principles on which the division of domestic labour were based in the GDR. Firstly, who ever is home first starts the work and, secondly, particular tasks are undertaken by the family member who is quicker and more efficient (Gysi and Meyer 1993)[10].

> If [house] work is left undone during they day we tend to this together. We like to have time together in the evening to talk. He tells me about his work or I tell him what happened here. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

The context of the husband's employment and ideas on how families should spend their time may render a traditional division of domestic labour acceptable. Inge wished her

husband would take on more housework. Yet, considering his demanding and time consuming occupation her priority is spending time as a family.

> We are quite happy when he [husband] is off work the whole Sunday. Well, then I don't want to send him into the bathroom and tell him to clean the toilet now. We prefer to go out somewhere. I am stuck with the household. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

Her husband shares prioritising the care of children. Once some of the pressure at work eased off, he could come home earlier in the evening and help to put their two young children, a one- and a four-year-old, to bed. It is much appreciated by Inge.

Doucet (1995) pointed out that it is wrong to treat all household tasks as 'chores' and that some tasks can be experienced as pleasure. Apart from hinting that work and enjoyment are not mutually exclusive, this opens the way to look at how housework is experienced. How much household tasks are disliked or enjoyed is influenced by the context and also depends on the other activities undertaken by the person concerned (Doucet 1995). Taking into account the gendered nature of housework and that levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction do not run along the lines of equal sharing (Baxter and Western 1998; Van Berkel and De Graaf 1999) result in a maze open to misunderstandings of support expected or hoped for by women and help offered by men.

> Sometimes I think he could do a bit more. He, sometimes he thinks he is going to help me more when he cooks the meal. Then I say, no, you take the little one now. I just need a little bit of distance. I prefer to peel the potatoes, but I need this distance from the children now. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

Husbands who are not active in the labour market may or may not contribute more housework. Yet, when they are employed again their support may change rapidly. Anke described how she did not have to prepare lunch or put the washing machine on while her husband was at home for three years due to ill health. This rapidly changed to traditional role expectations when he started a retraining course, resulting in a big advantage for Anke's husband.

> I don't think that he could cope if I were to go out to work. I would come home in the evening and I would cook just something, or so. Where as now I have always got something when he comes home. There is food there. I am at home whenever he comes home. I think he likes it. (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

The transition to working at home as a family day care provider does not seem to be the point where women make strong arguments for a shift towards a more equal sharing of domestic work. The general allocation seems to taken place earlier in their relationship.

> When we got our first flat I often had to beg and plead. At home he never had to do any housework. But when our second child arrived he realised that everything was a bit much for me. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

Similarly Dagmar explained that the division of domestic labour developed from when her husband went to sea. If the division of labour seems to be more responsive to changes in husband's working patterns (Wheelock 1990) it is also strongly determined by whether women are staying at home, whether homeworking or not.

> My husband says it is better when I am staying at home because of the children. And [because], well, just a little bit, when I am at home he does not have to do so much in the household [laughs]. He is after his own interests. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

Taking up Child Raising Leave can result in a change in the division of domestic labour, which cannot be rectified by taking up the work as family day care provider.

> When I was at home with Marieke [daughter] ... I ended up doing most of it. Because he was at work and I was at home with the little one. It just worked out that I do everything. All but shopping. He usually went by car. I did not have the car here. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

The allocation of work is apparently satisfactory for men, as previous research has shown (Gershuny et al. 1996).

Children

Children of family day care providers are inevitably drawn into the provision of family day care. Often they have been closely connected to the reasons why women become childminders or *Tagesmütter* (see Chapter 4) and, as the questionnaire data shows, they are directly drawn into looking after other people's children. The form this involvement takes and the effect on children differs across the age range. Similarly, the perceived advantages and disadvantages for children whose mother provides family day care change according to their age. When family day care providers talked about the impact on their own children it was in connection either with activities and relationships between their own children and the children in their care, or with the consequences for internal family relationships.

In order to examine children's involvement in the care for other people's children the use of space is an interesting starting point. The decision over what space is used for family day care has a greater impact on children than on husbands. In Germany, where particular rooms are not excluded from being suitable for formal childcare, it seems to go without saying that minded children play in the bedroom of the child of the *Tagesmutter*[11] when children are approximately the same age. This basis for sharing is uneven. For instance it includes the sharing of the child's toys to a much greater extent than the sharing of the looked-after-child's belongings.

> Now that all the children are there – they are her toys and everybody plays with them – and it happens to be her room. ... I think it is really a disadvantage that, that the other, that everybody takes it for granted playing with her toys. But when they bring a toy from home, she is not allowed to touch. This child immediately gets a fit if she touches the toy. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

In England the physical separation of the child's bedroom and the space registered for childminding offers a relatively easy solution by keeping 'special' toys upstairs out of the sight and reach of the minded children[12]. However, this has implications for the financial impact of childminding of the household. Toys for the use of minded children have to be acquired.

Older children in both countries appear more successful in protecting their rooms from an invasion of inquisitive toddlers. With that a potentially powerful source of conflict between children is removed.

> And I think it's easier with older children, than if you've got younger children, you know, because they've got their own lives. They are out at school. They do not have to share, what they would see as their toys and things, you see. (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Yet when the house is small or poorly soundproofed children may be more affected by the work of their mothers. It tends then to be up to the family day care provider to balance the needs of family members with those of the children in her care.

> [W]hen you have exams ... It was trying to keep the children sort of out. That's why I used to go out all the time. So she [the daughter] could actually afford to study. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

Irrespective of how well children are able to protect their private space or whether they have to share with minded children, they may be involved in looking after other people's children and may contribute to domestic labour.

Children in England

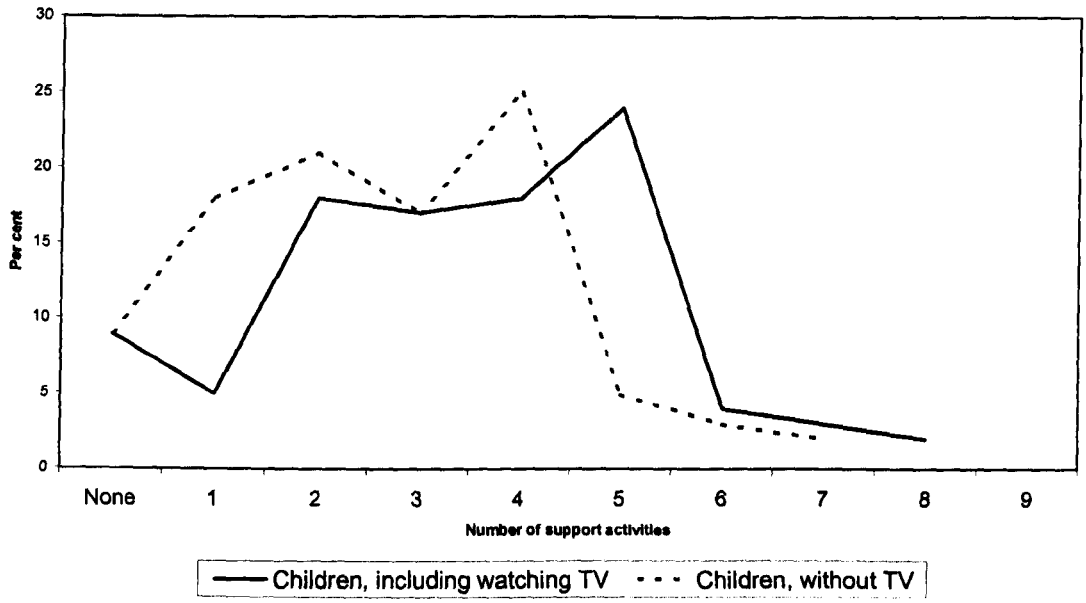
A list similar to that for husbands was drawn up for the children of the childminder (Table 8.4). The item 'talks to parents' was replaced with 'watch TV with children in your care' and the item 'looks more often after own' was removed (see Appendix 5)[13].

Table 8.4: Children's support activities in England

Activity of children of 100 childminders	Childminders confirming statement N	Childminders confirming statement %
Plays with minded child	90	90
Watch TV with minded	76	76
Comforts minded child	58	58
Helps taking children out	51	51
Feeds minded child	36	36
Does more housework	13	13
Does more shopping	10	10
Cooks more often	6	6
Offers other support	4	4
Keeps the books	2	2

Nine of the listed ways to support their mother (excluding 'other') were used to create a scale for support by children (Figure 8.6). Nine childminders (nine per cent) did not receive any support in their work as a childminder or support with domestic work from their children. This remained the same when 'watching TV with the minded children' was excluded. The mean indicator for support by children was 3.6 and the median 4. When 'watching TV' was excluded the mean dropped to 2.79 and the median to 3.

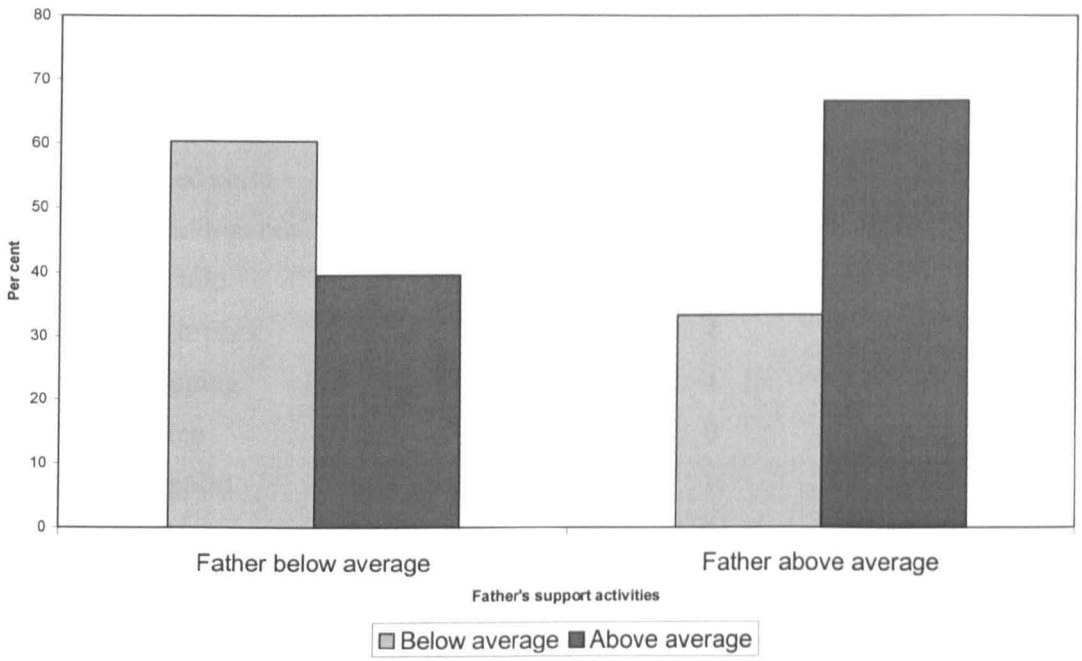
Figure 8.6: Scale of children's support with and without watching TV



The further analysis of the quantitative data showed two relationships that have some explanatory power. The first relationship shows that the support by children is gendered. The questionnaires in England showed that the gender of children influences the support offered to their mother. In families where the child or all children were male (19 families) only 26 per cent of childminders received support above average. When the child or all children were female (23 families) this proportion rose to 74 per cent. In the 58 families where there were at least one son and one daughter the support received by childminders was nearly equally split between below average at 48 per cent and above average at 52 per cent ($p<0.01$)[14].

The second relationship shows that children model their behaviour on their parents. Children with fathers supporting the childminder above average were more likely to forward support also exceeding the average (Figure 8.7). Sixty-seven per cent of childminders received above average support from their children when their husband did the same. Only 40 per cent of the childminders in a household where the husband offered below average support received above average support from her child or children ($p>0.05$).

Figure 8.7: The influence of husband's support at home on children's support offered to their mothers



Further analysis of the data showed no other relationships. For example, the support forwarded by children was independent of the number of children the childminder had on her roll, the working week of their mother, and of any initial involvement before a new child was taken on. It seems to confirm a virtuous circle within households, which is hardly susceptible to impetus from mothers' self-employment as family day care provider.

Children in Germany

The German questionnaire contained the same questions about the activities of the own children of the *Tagesmutter* as the English one did. Of the 20 *Tagesmütter* who returned the questionnaire 14 lived in the same household as their own children. The household where the oldest child was three years old was excluded from the list of activities[15] (Table 8.5).

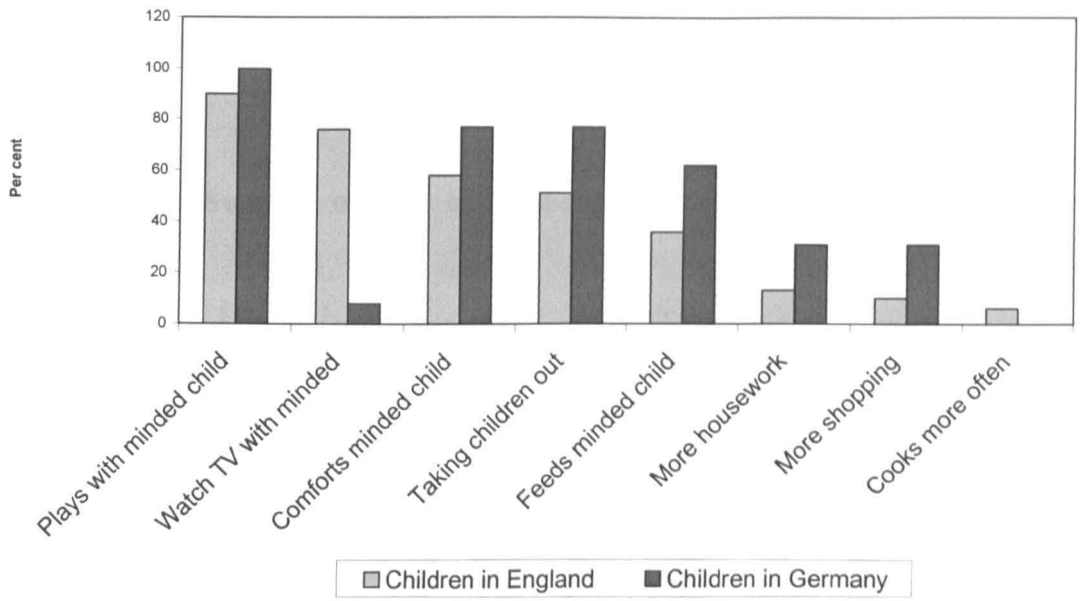
Table 8.5: German children supporting their mothers

Activity of children of 13 *Tagesmütter*	*Tagesmütter* confirming statement N	*Tagesmütter* confirming statement %
Plays with minded child	13	100
Watch TV with minded	1	8
Comforts minded child	10	77
Helps taking children out	10	77
Feeds minded child	8	62
Does more housework	4	31
Does more shopping	4	31
Cooks more often	0	
Offers other support	1	8
Keeps the books	0	

In spite of the limited number of *Tagesmütter* (13 compared to 100 childminders) who lived with their children and therefore, for whom support could be possible is much smaller, differences between the German and the English samples are traceable.

Overall *Tagesmütter* received more support from their children than childminders (Figure 8.8). One possible explanation is that children in Germany spend more time out of school. Therefore it appears a safe assumption that German children spend more time at home. The likelihood that the children of the *Tagesmutter* had spent more time with the children in their mother's care is facilitated by the longer hours per week and the regularity of five days a week most children are looked after by a *Tagesmutter* compared to children in England (see Chapter 5).

Figure 8.8: Comparison of proportion of support offered by children in England and Germany

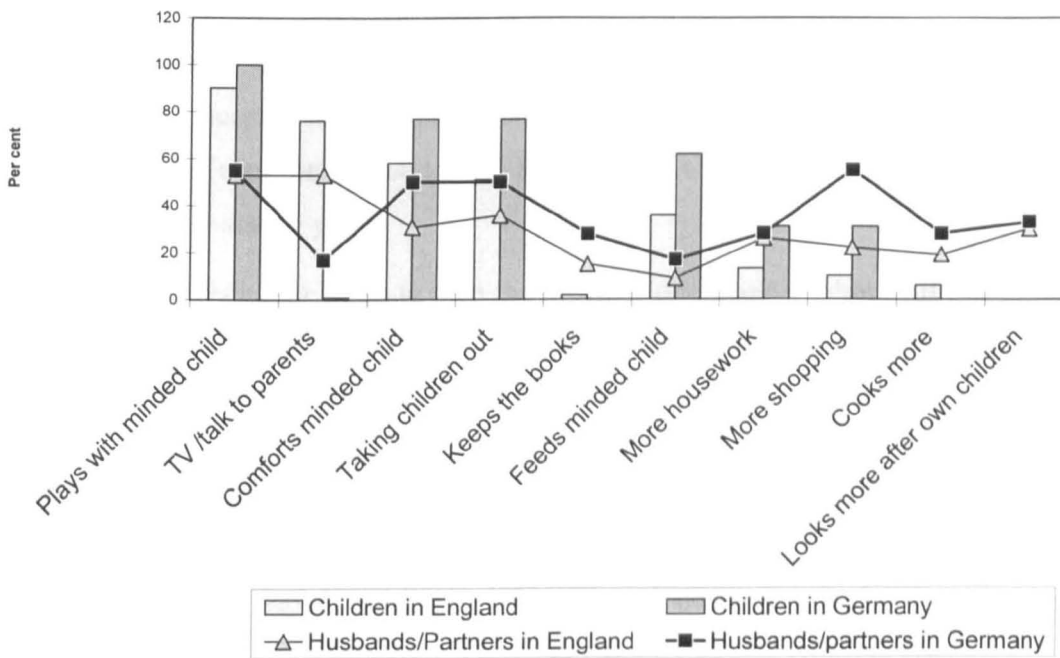


The only two items where childminder's children are more prominent are 'watching TV with minded children' and 'cooking'. The first item reflects a difference in approach in England and Germany. In Germany television is not seen as particularly suitable for young children. The literature for *Tagesmütter* implies that family day care providers can organise their days without having to fall back on props like television (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1996b; Kurth 1997). In England using television programmes in order to find "a short time to relax" (Hobart and Frankel 1999, p. 28) appears to be accepted and in general watching television is part of children's lives. An explanation of why children of *Tagesmütter* do not increase their contribution in cooking meals can be forwarded only tentatively. The description of daily routines and the advantages *Tagesmütter* see in their work include the opportunity to provide a cooked meal for their children when they come home from school at lunch time. The involvement of the child is therefore neither possible nor attempted. Meals in the evening usually are not cooked.

Housework in the household of family day care providers

Figure 8.9 draws together the proportion of support childminders and *Tagesmütter* receive from husbands and children. Overall own children seem to be more involved than husbands in activities with other people's children. Husbands, however, increase their contribution to housework to a greater extent than children do.

Figure 8.9: Support offered by husband and children in England and in Germany



Many interviews showed that even teenage children are not particularly involved in housework tasks and are not expected to contribute.

> But the girls, you know I mean, they wouldn't have to come and wash up. Because I would just do everything as I go along. And everything is done on a morning. I just polish here and everything before the children come. And so there is not a lot to do. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

> It's all mine, yes. They don't know how to do a dish, do they. They're so spoilt. They will load the dish washer. But, no, they

> don't do any housework. I mean sometimes they'll, I'll say to Lara, "Oh Lara, can you just help to tidy the toys away". And she would do. But they don't do any housework anyway. (laughs) (Liz, worked as a childminder 5 years)

For Almut the question whether her children increased their contribution to domestic labour was missing the point.

> I have to say it is exactly the other way round. They had more duties when I was still working. We shared out equally. That was when I came home late in the afternoon. We share out more equal. However, I have to say, at lunch time when she is outside [minded baby sleeping in her pram in the garden] I finish everything here. Peter [son] only has to do his room. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

Working as a *Tagesmutter* helps to take the pressure of domestic labour off her teenage sons. However, in some families particular tasks were allocated to individual family members, but this was not triggered by the work as a family day care provider.

> It always has been like this. Then, when our dad [Monika's husband] went to sea it was like this. And I did go out to work and everybody had some duties. One was responsible for the dishes. The other one had to do the shopping or take the rubbish out. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Similar to the change of workload of husbands the workload of children may decline when women move from employment outside the home to self-employment in the family home.

The division of housework of family day care providers appears to be influenced by approaches taken before women started this form of self-employment. It depends on the extent to which adults accept or reject traditional gender roles and on ideas about childrearing. Taking up self-employment as a family day care provider working at home seems to result in a lightening of the workload expected and forwarded by husbands and children.

'There is always somebody at home': being the child of a family day care provider

The effect family day care has on provider's children stems on the one hand from the company of other people's children and on the other hand from having a mother working at home. This section begins with looking at the relationship between the family day care provider's children and the looked-after-children in these temporary 'toddler households'. It continues by looking at the effect this form of homework has on the relationship between mother and child, and draws out the disadvantages arising out of being the child of a childminder or *Tagesmutter.*

'She is like a sort of sister, in a way'[16]

The most frequently mentioned joint activity of minded and own children was play. The impact of the different ages of the children has to be considered. For younger own children playing may have mutual benefits, providing each with a mate. However, older children often seem to enjoy the company of younger children and feel flattered by their admiration. Almut described the involvement of her 20-year-old son and his 15-year-old brother and Birgit that of her 17-year-old son when she had a one-year-old on her list.

> He still sits with them on the carpet [and plays]. And my boys are popular. Well, when Peter comes in, the little ones come running to him, give him a cuddle and keep hold of his leg. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

> He fetches him sometimes. Lets him into his room. And he is, the little one is really crazy about him, I have to say. ... When he [the son] is here and the door is closed – there he is standing on the door, knocking, in his way – that he is allowed in. (Birgit, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

German childcare experts draw attention to demographic trends towards one-child-families. One consequence is that children's experiences of other children are reduced[17]. With that family day care has the additional benefit to provide single children with 'part-time siblings' (Kurth 1997, p. 32). The advantage of family day care from the perspective of the child originates from extending the family to include honorary members. It allows

experiences which had formerly been positioned within their family but cannot be provided anymore (Pettinger 1996).

> I had hoped for David [son] to receive such a day family – just that he is involved in the different age groups in his house. (Christiane, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 ½ years)

Children of similar age playing together were perceived as having an opportunity to learn how to share and to socialise[18]. Additionally, it is seen to provide insight into behaviour and expressions of emotions by other children. Especially parents of single children, or those who became family day care providers before their second child was born emphasised the positive effect of their own children meeting children of different ages.

> Eventually his [son] possessiveness changed to sharing. Yeah, he would share. He learned and he learned quickly. I suppose that would have been the same situation if one, if once his brother came along. Of course, it hit him earlier, which is probably the better time, I think. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

> I think she has learned about other people's feelings, as well, that they are not always going to be in a good mood, that somebody will be in a grumpy mood at times, and that she's got to go along with that. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

Older children can learn what is involved in looking after babies and younger children. In particular girls were often described by their mothers as keen on being involved in the caring side.

> I mean a good aspect was that you saw that having children and babies was not just something all earnings, easy. You saw all the aspects of looking after children, like changing dirty nappies. So she knew ... what to expect if she ever does get her own children. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

It appears that some children develop very close relationships with the children in their mother's care. This is facilitated when children are cared for from very early babyhood

and children are involved in their daily care. Her son Leo was 10 years old when Monika started to work as a *Tagesmutter.*

> Isabella came to us when she was three month old. Sometimes we looked after her on a weekend. Leo was usually the one to be here after school, and he sometimes gave her her bottle and took her for a walk and changed nappies and played with her. She has grown into the family. You can notice that Leo and Isabella have a much closer relationship than somebody who joined us later. It's different. Well, Isabella is his, his [while Monika is searching for the right expression, Leo throws in 'sibling'] Yes, yes, yes, like a little sister. That is inevitable. (Monika, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 2 years)

Other advantages for the family day care providers' own children are that the company of children offers additional insights and knowledge. According to Louise looking after a child of divorced parents helped her daughter to cope with the breakdown of her parents' marriage. Louise's daughter was three years old when her mother took up childminding.

> My childminding came really handy because the girl who I was childminding from being tiny, her mum and dad didn't live together. So through my childminding my little girl came to terms with her dad going. ... I don't think my little girl would have walked through so well if it wasn't to the fact that the girl constantly spoke about seeing her dad on a weekend: that's my daddy's time, my mummy's time. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

The close relationships between children can extend to other family members over time. Here Margaret talks about the children and the family she had been looking after for seven years.

> But they, they are part of the family now, aren't they [speaking to Eilean, her daughter]. You know. The mother is my friend now. And I mean, they more or less classed my two with sort of brother and sister type of thing. I mean [speaking to Eilean] your house

> warming, everybody went, you know. They're just part of the family, really. (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years)

In this family not only was the childminder's family extended, but Margaret felt that the family of the children she had been looking after was extended, too. She was not only a friend to the mother but expressed their relationship in kinship terms: "I'm like an adopted grandma." (Margaret, worked as a childminder 6 years).

Some of the interviews revealed that a close friendship between two families had developed. It would take the form that families visit each other, or parents socialise with the family day care provider without their children, or children would return to visit their childminder a long time after they had left their care[19]. Another effect exceeding the 'normal' childcare arrangements was that teenage children of the family day care provider would be able to earn some money as babysitter in the evening in the household of the child.

Mother and child

The advantage of having a mother working in family day care is perceived to be that there is somebody at home, so that children do not have to be looked after by somebody else or come to an empty house after school. There is somebody there to listen immediately and children do not have to wait until the evening. Additionally for older children emergency situations, like illness can be handled with more ease.

> He is getting his lunch here. The advantage is that there is always somebody here, isn't it? About his homework – at the day centre it was always a kind of assembly line and it was not neat. Now that I am at home and we sometimes do his homework together he has improved a lot at school. (Ursula, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 8 months)

> The children came home and I was there. They got their lunch. They could tell me immediately what had happened that day. They could get rid of it instantly. You were there and could listen. You did not have to wait until the evening when you were stressed out yourself. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

The ability to provide their children with a home cooked meal and the possibility of supervising homework was particularly important to *Tagesmütter.*

Disadvantages

> Sometimes she [daughter] might think, she is not getting enough of the attention she might want – [me] looking after the other one. But I do try to - you know, by the time the childminding one went, I would say, come here, give me a cuddle. You know, that she would get it more then. And I, well I attempt to explain to her, if, ehm, if Gabriella is hurt, fell and I'm cuddling her, often Roxanne [daughter] would come, (imitating squeaky voice) I fell over as well. She hasn't. But she wants a cuddle as well. So I tend to put my arms round both of them and give her a cuddle in that way. So probably, I would say the only bad thing is she might feel a little bit resentment that she wasn't getting the full attention. But I think she is wise enough to know, that they are here all day and that they are not sleeping here. So, it's only - and I've explained to her, why they are coming, you know. They come because their daddy and mummy paying me for looking after them. And that little bit of money buys treats and things like that. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

What was in general portrayed as an advantage of family day care to both sets of children has also some negative aspects. For example, the highly valued learning goal of sharing does not take place on an equal footing. The younger children are the more difficulties they appear to experience in protecting their own interests. They are expected to share their space, their toys and the attention of their mothers. Children of the family day care provider may feel jealous and resent the 'other' child.

> But my little boy – I had problems after I had my little boy with Gayle [minded girl] because there was quite a bit of jealousy building up. I couldn't really get it sorted out. [After the girl was out of nappies she could be looked after by Gayle's grandmother] ... So I said, well, what we do is, we'll give her, let her go to her

> grandma and let my son settle down and get, you know, things back into perspective again, before I start to do it again. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Women who started to work as a family day care provider when their children were very young claimed, that their children were not jealous because they did not know about having a mother all to oneself[20]. Jealousy would not occur because, as several family day care providers explained, they were just like a 'big family'.

Yet possible problems arising from children's relationship are acknowledged in literature for childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Kurth (1997) advises prospective *Tagesmütter* to observe how children get on with each other, in order to avoid a situation where one child dominates another. The guide for childminders lists possible effects, like having to share space, toys and home together with the opportunities to enjoy friendship and learn about other cultures (Hobart and Frankel 1999, pp. 9).

Most of the interviewed women feel that all the children, whether their own or minded, should be treated equally. This approach is informed by ideas of equality as well being a consequence of modelling family day care on 'motherhood'. As long as this concerns, for example, the amount of sweets each child receives it may not be difficult. However, when there is no easy solution possible, like sharing something out in equal parts, family day carers' formal and informal care clash. Own children may be disadvantaged. Karin's answer to the question whether she treated all of the children the same or differently when they were the same age is typical for the approach, and the difficulties for childminders and *Tagesmütter*.

> I am a little bit more strict with my own, I think. I always said I make a better childminder than I did with my own. Which is a horrible admission, but I used to think, you know, I am a bit too hard on them. I wonder if I am hard on them because I am a childminder. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

This may not be to the advantage of the children of the family day care provider, but have advantages for the family day care provider.

> They had to suffer [laughs]. Why, I don't know. Because sometimes you are scolding your own, when something did not

> work out, then the others pricked up their ears and listened, too. I think it had more effect on them than on my own. (Karin, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 20 years)

As their children got older expectations changed. *Tagesmütter* thought that it might be a disadvantage for their own older children that they have to be quiet while the little ones sleep. Dagmar reflects on her practices towards her own children, when she cannot react to all of the children's demands at the same time.

> I used to say, I don't mind who has to wait. But today it's often the case that I tell them, well you are big now. Just wait a moment. (Dagmar, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 11 years)

Also older children may be hindered from following their interests. For example older children would prefer to watch different programmes on television which are not seen as suitable for the younger, looked-after-children. Other children could not take part in for example, sports activities because it would not agree with the kind of care family day care providers ought to provide as held by the childminder.

> It is very hard to go swimming when you have got a range of children. Or if the children are saying, will you take me to a football match? ... So I can't, you know, I can't take you there going to see the footballer or what ever. Because I can't, it's not fair on these [the minded]. Or I am dragging them to soft-plays with the little children. And there they are all day not wanting to be there now. (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years)

Since the analysis is based on the family day carers responding to questionnaires and interview questions an assessment of the severity or an evaluation of effects on children can not be undertaken. However, the childminders and *Tagesmütter* explained that taking up this work made them reflect more on how they treat their children and compare it to how they treat other people's children in their care. "A different feeling inside" towards her own children affects how children are treated (Alison, worked as a childminder 8 years). And these feelings make it difficult to maintain an equal treatment of all children.

> I always want to protect Sophie [daughter] more, you know. If they start fighting ... I feel more defensive when it's Sophie. (Angela, worked as a childminder 1 year)

The demands arising out of providing formal care can deeply affect the mother-child relationship. For example, there are different rules that have to be followed.

> Like when I started childminding I had to change my whole routine even with my two. I mean, like, I don't believe in, like smacking my two for anything. But, like, if they've done something really bad they could get smacked for it. And you know they have this - and they make childminders working a non-smacking policy, which a lot of parents do have. But I believe sometimes that getting sent to the bedroom or getting told off is just not enough in certain circumstances. That a smack on the back-side or the back of the hand, depending on what they do, is sometimes needed. But obviously, since I've started childminding I don't smack mine at all. I've had to change the whole way I check them. (Louise, worked as a childminder 3 years)

Having a mother who applies a non-smacking policy to all children is, of course, an advantage. In England another possible restriction brought about by the provision of formal care that can spill into informal care arises from the demand that minded children are supervised all the time. This can, for example, impinge on children's freedom to walk home from school or to play outside. Here the issue is the changed relationship between mother and child or children. This can take another direction.

> The disadvantage is that they experience their mother very different [laughs], as when you are alone with them. It is like, oh, why does she react so strangely? Then they [the own children] have to find an explanation for this. ... You are stricter [with your own] when there are other children, naturally. When you are alone you are more likely to let things pass. (Astrid, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 1 1/2 years)

Obviously as the children of the family day care provider change and grow older the conflict potential, or at least the kind of conflicts alter. It appears that many childminders and *Tagesmütter* attempt to develop a few ground rules, like such on which space or toys can be accessed by the cared-for-children with or without permission or not at all; and otherwise decide ad hoc. There was one *Tagesmutter* who had worked out a very strict approach.

> I allow my children to have toys only they use, toys they don't have to share. ... I make sure that my children are given priority. ... I do not discriminate against the children in my care, or anything like that. Yet they always have to be aware that the others are my children. My children must not feel neglected.[21]
> (Anke, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 years)

The English literature on family day care appears to underestimate the powerful impact that the provision of family day care can have on the family of childminders. There is, however, a recognition that the attitude of the childminder's own child or children can contribute to the breakdown of childcare arrangements (Ferri 1992). The German literature recognises to some extent the importance of the conflict potential and (Blüml 1996; Kurth 1997). The interviews revealed only one case where a conflict between children resulted in parents ending the childcare arrangement[22]. However, the sampling of interviewees (only active family day care providers were considered) was not well suited to follow up this question.

Research into the experience of family day care providers' children remains to be undertaken. These issues may find parallels in the research of foster care. Only recently has an interest in the 'children who foster'[23] developed (Triseliotis et al. 2000). Pugh's research was triggered by her suspicion that the "biological children of foster carers held the power to make or break a placement" (Pugh 1999, p. 175). Listening to children who foster revealed that they take on a role in fostering, are able to express satisfaction and dissatisfaction with certain aspects, and care as well for the children in their parents' care as for their own parents (Part 1999; Pugh 1999).

Money: the contribution of money earned from childcare

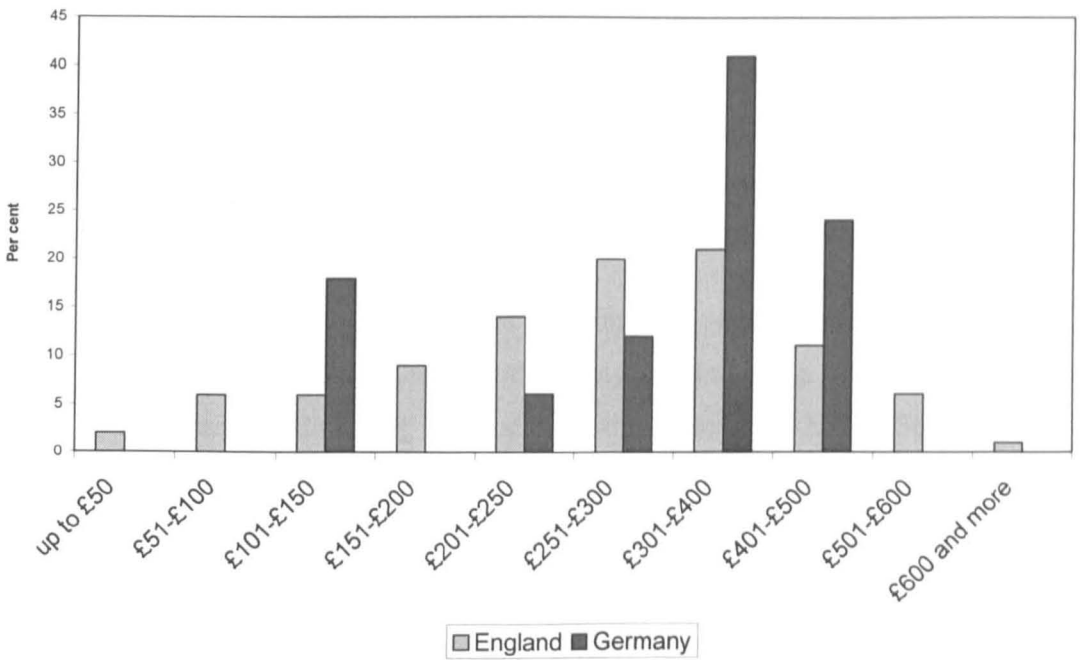
> It just blends in [laughs]. We don't have money for anything, really. Just all the money that comes in, it just goes in and just goes out. (Ruth, worked as a childminder 2 years)

The income gained through working as a family day care provider has a significant effect on the financial situation of the family, in spite of the fact that the average income of individual childminders and *Tagesmütter*, compared to income they could in principle achieve in the labour market, is low. As discussed in Chapter 4, money was, combined with other reasons, a motivator to become a childminder for 36 per cent of the 177 questionnaire respondents who noted down their reasons in England, and 30 per cent of the respondents in Germany. In another section of the questionnaire childminders were asked to rate a variety of statements (Appendix 5). One of these was 'I need to earn money'. Fifty-eight per cent of 156 active childminders ticked 'agree strongly' and another 27 per cent agreed. The answers of twenty active childminders were equally divided between 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' at six per cent each. Only three childminders ticked 'don't know' and seven did not tick a box at all.

One-hundred-and-twenty-seven (78 per cent of 163) active childminders and 17 (85 per cent) *Tagesmütter* had forwarded information about their household income, after tax and including child benefit. Figure 8.10 shows that the household incomes in England have a wider range, but that the median household income in Rostock of £301-400 a week is higher than the median income of £251-300 a week in the Northeast of England.

The statement of needing to earn money was in England connected to the household income. There were 123 (76 per cent) active childminders who provided information on their household income and rated the statement 'I need to earn money'. All of the 15 childminders who felt that they did not need to earn money lived in a household with an income above the sample's median.

Figure 8.10: Range of household incomes in England and Germany



Neither for childminders nor for *Tagesmütter* could a relationship between the household income and the income they earned from family day care be found. Whether women earned above or below the average income of childminders respectively *Tagesmütter* was not correlated to their household income. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* who compared with other family day care providers earned above average were not necessarily found in households with higher incomes[24]. This is not surprising in the light of the low income childminders and *Tagesmütter* earn.

The interviews in England showed that particularly in low-income families the money earned from family day care contributed considerably to the living standards of families. Evelyn is a lone mother. The money she receives for minding Gabriella and Gavin is vital.

> It always means at the end of the week – you go out and get your benefits on a Monday, but it sort of is not much – by Friday I have not got anything left. And with her going to school and that it's usually on a Saturday when I obviously spend time with her, doing things. And I have got no money to do it. So it means I only got money from Gabriella on a Friday and money from Gavin.

> And that will tide us over. (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

In England childminding can help childminders to move on to a better position in the benefit system. This is either through being the base for eligibility for Family Credit or by moving the claimant up to a higher rate as in Laura's case. This possible effect is maintained by the introduction of Working Family Tax Credit, replacing Family Credit.

> And of course I work 16 hours for [company name] anyway. So I qualify for Family Credit without my childminding. And then with my childminding I actually I work at least 30 hours. So I qualify for the higher rate of Family Credit[25]. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Another aspect of the gendered systems of money management is that women's spending patterns differ from those of men. Money entering the household through a woman's wage packet or as benefit is more likely to augment the housekeeping (Pahl 1989) or to be spent on children (Morris 1989; Corden and Craig 1991; Bradshaw and Stimson 1997). According to the interviews money earned from family day care was most frequently spent on grocery shopping and/or used to pay for fuel and water bills. This may be simply a question of pragmatism – women earn the money and they do most of the grocery shopping – or may be due to an established pattern of money allocation.

> I actually keep all my money what I get. But I get no housekeeping from Tom [husband]. Whatever Tom makes ... gets paid into the bank and it pays for all the bills and holidays and everything. So he gives me no money. ... What I make, as I said, runs the house and buys the food. (Deborah, worked as a childminder 15 years)

Deborah argued that the fact that Tom does not have to give her £100 housekeeping money was the reason they could afford to go on holidays and, for example, buy a new car. She also described how, when her children were younger, she had to ask her husband to buy shoes, when she had run out of money.

Laura was the childminder who expressed most strongly that all the money she earns from looking after other people's children is spent on her own children.

> And if I did not childmind we would still be able to live in the house we live in. We would still be able to eat. But, you know, to claw back to be able to live, we would have to stop all the luxury things ... like piano lessons, dancing competitions cost a fortune, you know. Dancing outfits cost a fortune. They would all have to stop. So it gives me a better standard of living. (Laura, worked as a childminder 5 years)

Laura identifies with her children. She terms the luxuries she buys for her children as her living standard.

Against this background for the *Tagesmütter* in the new *Länder* the opportunity to start a micro business as family day care provider and at the same time being able to contribute to the household's finances was immensly valued and raised their self-confidence. For example Monika (working as a *Tagesmutter* two years) has her own business account. It is used to pay for the running costs of family day care and the acquisition of tools of the trade (e.g. toys, push-chairs). She uses what is left at the end of the month to contribute to the living costs of the family. Although her husband is in secure employment she feels that her additional income raises their living standard. This was reflected in a remark her son made. He commented that he appreciates the work of his mother, because it allows him to buy more things.

Of course the benefits of raising confidence are not reserved for women who have grown up in a socialist state. Inge, who migrated with her family to Rostock, values her chance to contribute to the household's finances, even against the background that her family would not suffer any hardship if she could not provide any income.

> At the moment we try to save some money, because sometime in the future we would like to buy or build our own house. And for that it is convenient. Without this money we still could save. But it would be clearly less. (Inge, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 5 month)

For Inge working and earning some money is important to prove that she can be more than a housewife and mother. She plans to return to her work as a teacher when her daughter is a bit older.

It is important that women derive satisfaction from their ability to earn money and they gain access to personal spending money (Pahl 1989; Stubbs and Wheelock 1990). However, none of the interviewed childminders and *Tagesmütter* mentioned that the money earned from family day care was earmarked as pocket money. This highlights the potential effects of women's access to the labour market and the benefits of a market income for women (Lundberg et al. 1997). However, this can improve women's and children's position only if men's traditional status as main breadwinner in the family is challenged concurrently (Vogler 1994; Laurie and Gershuny 2000).

The limitations of the income earned from family day care result from its unreliability (see Chapter 5). Some childminders explained that the money is so unreliable that the only use you can make of it is to enhance day-to-day living costs. The apparently higher stability of family day care arrangements in German and the higher average income received by *Tagesmutter* may contribute to maintain their confidence stance within their household.

Conclusion: Like a big family?

Childminders and *Tagesmütter* take on a public role even in the private space of their home. As a result they provide informal and formal care, and paid and unpaid work. Other members of the household, particularly children are involved and affected. The greatest importance attached by their mothers is that children do not return to an empty house or have to use other childcare facilities. The price children pay is that they have to give up space, toys and their mother's attention. They are expected to develop friendships with other children, or to take the role of part-time replacement older brother or sister. Girls in particular are drawn into supporting the care for other people's children.

Children experience their mothers in the role of care providers for 'other' children. The tensions for the childminder and the *Tagesmutter* between 'treating all children equally' and 'expressing the kinship relation to their children' may result in disadvantages for the family day care provider's child. They may be treated more strictly and be used as an example. As the responsible adults childminders and *Tagesmütter* have to find ways to deal with competition and jealousy, and to promote positive relationships between children. Mediating the different interests and needs of all the children present is another tightrope for family day care providers to walk. The balance is to be found by taking the right decision concerning the space, toys and cuddles, and by establishing and

maintaining rules. This spills into the time when all the other people's children have left the family day care providers home.

The research shows that children were not really involved in the decision whether their mother would start to work as a family day care provider. Children's participation in the decision whether individual children are taken on seems to be similarly minimal. It may be difficult for a childminder or *Tagesmutter* to predict whether a child fits in well with her children and whether childcare arrangements may turn out as a success. For children the consequence of an individual new child may be even more difficult to anticipate.

However, according to the descriptions of the childminders and *Tagesmütter* most of the time the relationships developed between children are positive and a valued part of children's social life. To view children's contribution to the provision of family day care as supporting their mother in their paid work was more covert. The impact on children when the minded children leave the care of the their mother was not touched upon by the interviewed family day care providers. Settling in and, when childcare arrangements end, settling out periods[26] may be as necessary for the family day care provider's child as for the cared-for-child.

Husbands appeared to an interesting extent untouched. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* expressed this in statements like 'as long as I am happy, he is happy'. Some men did develop positive relationships with children and appeared to enjoy their role as replacement fathers. Compared to their children they contribute less to the childcare tasks but slightly more to other domestic labour. It may reflect that full-time working husbands spend less time at home when minded children are present. Yet it may well be that husbands are able to take up the pleasant aspects of family day care and otherwise continue as before.

When relationships between the looked-after-children and the family's own children, or the husband worked out childminders and *Tagesmütter* made use of kinship labels. Children became nearly like a brother or sister, or nearly like a daughter or son, summed up as 'just like a big family'. Interestingly looked-after-children were not described as 'nearly like a daughter' or 'nearly like a son' to the childminder or *Tagesmutter*. This may be seen as the upholding of a boundary between private and public caring roles in the face of the general blurring of informal and formal care. Perhaps it is also a recognition that family day care takes mothering as a model but does not replace it.

The whole family – if differentially – benefits from the income earned from family day care. It boosts the household income and, by passing through the mother's hand, it is more likely to be spent on food, clothes or consumer goods for children. In other families it is this money that buys 'extras' like a holiday or music lessons. Even if the amount of money that can be earned is small it proves to women that they can work, that they can earn money and achieve in this way a little bit more financial independence from their husband or the state.

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[1] All of the participants of an introduction course for childminders in Gateshead were future family day care providers. During my participant observation for my unpublished undergraduate dissertation (Gelder 1997) no other family member was present, and it appeared to be a possibility not considered by participants or course leaders. This course took place in the evening – when husbands could look after the prospective childminder's children. Courses offered during the day offered a crèche for children – another indication for that there were no intentions of involving the childminders' children.

[2] The temporary presence of looked-after children does not change the characteristics of a household as, for example, used by the census.

[3] Thereafter I shall refer to husbands and partners as 'husbands', because a number of family day carers attach importance to their married status. Some questionnaire respondents used the margins to emphasise that they were married, not just living with a partner. Similarly some respondents crossed out the 'partner' when questions or answers used the expression 'spouse/partner'.

[4] The percentage of registered childminders living with their husband is slightly lower at 90 per cent when childminders without children on their books are included.

[5] Unfortunately the data does not allow an insight into the process of negotiation.

[6] What had been identified as 'more' by the family day care providers may be very minimal, indeed. The tick of the box 'husband cooks more often' by one childminder turned out to be based on her husband sometimes warming up his own meal, when he returned late from work. This childminder was interviewed in the presence of her jointly registered husband. It turned out that she seemed to acknowledge every little contribution by him to the family's housework. Yet he was very aware, that he takes less than an equal share.

[7] Here 'talking' to parents' was excluded from the scale of husband's support.

[8] The only item where English husbands appear to be considerably more active was 'talking to parents'. This item was excluded, since it turned out that the translation into German changed the meaning. The interviews revealed that *Tagesmütter* understood that *Elterngespräch* (conversation with parents) as talking

about child development and pedagogy. In contrast childminders ticked the box 'talks to parents' when any kind of conversation between husband and parents took place.

[9] Almut's husband was particularly good at building and landscaping the garden for children. Before we started the interview Almut did showed me the garden where her husband had created a sheltered corner with a sandpit and a small hill for sledging. Later in the interview she picked up on these activities. "He belongs to the people who appreciate children and likes children. Well, and his thoughts – I would not have this idea to build the sledge hill. That's my husband. Or to build the edge of the sandpit like this. Or in the middle of the sandpit he installed a slice of a tree-trunk. He said, you know, children have it much easier to bake their mud pies there than on the small edge where they are sitting. And I, who have worked years and years as *Erzieherin*, I did not have this idea. Really, he puts himself in their shoes. (Almut, worked as a *Tagesmutter* 4 years)

[10] Partially due to these principles, women took on more domestic labour, because often they were home earlier. Additionally the rising unemployment of women after unification meant that women quickly were drawn into taking on the bulk of domestic labour (Gysi and Meyer 1993).

[11] German language expresses some of the different status children's bedrooms have. Their room is the *Kinderzimmer*, literally translated 'children's room'. To me it implies less intimacy than the English expression 'bedroom'.

[12] Children's bedrooms are often excluded from childminding because they are up-stairs. Based on the historical connections between the regulation of childminding and house fires, these were in many local authorities perceived to be too hazardous and excluded by default.

[13] The questionnaire asked only about the support of children who were 11 years or older. There were 57 active childminders with children younger than 11 years. However, there were three childminders who ticked boxed although their oldest child was younger than 11. The youngest oldest child who did support her mother was six years old. These three cases are included.

[14] The results from families with either only male or only female children suggests that the support offered in families with at least one son and one daughter is offered mainly by daughters.

[15] The German questionnaire did not restrict the question about the activities of children to children 11 years or older.

[16] (Evelyn, worked as a childminder 2 years)

[17] This should not be understood as a claim that the quality of family life for single children is worse than that of children with siblings (Hill and Tisdall 1997; Bundesministerium für Familie Senioren Frauen und Jugend 1998b).

[18] Bryan et al. (1980) expressed concern about the unequal relationship between the minder's and the minded children. They observed that the minders' own children tended to dominate other children, contributing to their subdued behaviour in the house of the childminder.

[19] One family had drawn up an agreement over guardianship in case the child would be orphaned or the parents were not able to fulfil their responsibilities.

[20] I believe the issue jealousy is extremely difficult to research. Admitting that one's own child is extremely jealous and at the same time to continue to work as a family day care provider may give the impression to demean the interests of one's own children. This comes close to being a 'bad' mother. That is problematic for women. Additionally it would create complications in the self-image of family day care providers because one justification for the satisfactory quality of their services is their experience of motherhood including the assumption that they are 'good' mothers. See also Chapter 7.

[21] That there are toys reserved for the sole use of Anke's children in the presence of the children Anke looks after was confirmed later on during this interview.

[22] The looked-after-child told her parents that she was scared to go to the *Tagesmutter* because she claimed to be bullied by one of the sons. When parents approached the *Tagesmutter* she found it difficult to believe that this son had been aggressive to the girl. She explained that if her other son would have been accused she would have been more inclined to believe the story. In the end these, in her eyes, wrong accusations undermined the necessary trust between her and the parents and the childcare arrangement was ended.

[23] 'Children who foster' appears at first sight somewhat strange shortcut for children of parents who foster. Yet this expression refers explicitly to the importance of foster parents' children. It has been used as chapter heading (Triseliotis et al. 2000) and as part of a book section (Pugh 1999).

[24] This calculation used the mean income earned by family day care providers before expenses. An inclusion of expenses in this calculation would render the ability to improve household incomes from family day care even weaker. Since it is intrinsically difficult to calculate the exact amount of expenses (see Chapter 5) an investigation of the relationship between household income and income earned from family day care was not undertaken.

[25] Since the research has taken place Family Credit has been replaced with Working Family Tax Credit.

[26] The need of a settling out period, where the child is prepared to leave the care of the family day care provider is discussed only in the German literature on family day care (for example, Erler 1996b) (Kurth 1997)

Chapter 9: Walking the tightrope: conclusions

Taking up self-employment as a family day care provider is a solution to how to reconcile production and reproduction by striving for a balance that avoids the need to find care for one's own children or paying for it, and by setting up in family day care offering a service within the individual framework of family commitments. The empirical material presented in the previous chapters has shown that this has several consequences. One is that the boundary defining the private home of the family day care provider's household is challenged from different directions: parents using the service, children in the care of the childminder or *Tagesmutter*, the business relationship through which care is delivered and the state. This creates an arena for a multitude of possible conflicts within the business household and in relation to others. These conflicts have to be managed by the family day care provider. The challenges levelled against the boundary of the private home of the family day care provider also constitute the backdrop against which the childminder or the *Tagesmutter* has to determine how to care for other people's children. Another consequence is that putting childcare within a family on the market, is restricted by a regulatory framework, affecting the working conditions of childminders and curtailing business opportunities.

The empirical material informing this research is representing the perspective of the family day care provider. It set out to describe and analyse the experience of women as they engage in homebased self-employment providing care for other people's children. It aimed to describe the labour process of family day care and asked questions about the form flexibility takes in the business of childminders and *Tagesmütter*. These social and economic experiences of family day care providers have been explored within the context of households' adaptation to life-course events and to economic change. At the same time business opportunities and the form these micro-businesses take had to be analysed as they are shaped by policies regulating family day care and providing other forms of childcare.

The research was guided by taking an institutional approach that allows the examination of power relationships within the family day care provider's household and between the family day care provider, the parents using this service and institutions regulating this form of childcare. It allowed looking at the multifaceted boundary between the public and

the private and at the role gender plays in organising childcare. A particular strength is the possibility to look at processes and changes over time. Taking an institutional approach is also particularly useful for comparative analysis. The cross-national research of childminders in the Northeast of England and *Tagesmütter* in Rostock in one new *Land* in the unified Germany contributes to the empirical knowledge of family day care, to the development of concepts utilised in social sciences and provide insights into policies and processes connected to social change.

Empirical knowledge

Let us start with the processes that channel women in England and in Germany into this kind of self-employment. The analysis of how women became childminders or *Tagesmütter* provides a vibrant description of the structures of constraint as they emerge in each of the research locations. Prospective childminders and *Tagesmütter* have in common with other mothers that their choice of how to allocate their time between paid and unpaid work is on the one hand connected to their reproductive role within the household and on the other hand takes place within the context of support and regulations set up by the state. The balance between childcare responsibilities and the need to earn money contributing to the household income is a particularly delicate one for mothers. Mothers' arrangements of unpaid and paid work can easily be thrown off balance. Chapter 4 has shown that this can happen from within the household, for example due to ill-health of a child or husbands' unavailability to take on childcare responsibilities, or it is connected to reasons external to the household, like the lack of suitable and affordable childcare or the lack of employment opportunities suitable for individual women. Quite often women became family day care providers due to unexpected changes. The push and pull factors of becoming a family day care provider and the business opportunities for childminders and *Tagesmütter* are two sides of the same coin. One path pushing women into family day care opened when their own childcare arrangements broke down and subsequently they decided to become family day care providers. Factors pulling women into family day care arise from the gendered role of mothers. Mothers are feeling responsible for children and for providing the bulk of childcare. English childminders were more likely to emphasise their obligation to care for their own young children at home and stressed the benefits this has for their children. Prevailing norms and values regarding childrearing are part of the structures in which decisions about paid and unpaid work are made. A large group of German *Tagesmütter* was pulled into this form of

childcare because it appeared to be the only way to be active in their occupation of a childcare worker after they were made redundant in connection with unification.

Structures of constraint determine the scope of possibilities for establishing a satisfactory balance of paid and unpaid work, and care. The position of individual women within these structures decides whether she is likely to register as a family day care provider. Yet there were important differences between the English and the German sample. English childminders were more likely to have no educational qualification or GCSE grades compared to women in the United Kingdom. These findings are very similar to the results of a study of childminders in England taking place at the same time – however at the time unknown (Mooney et al. 2001). The sample of *Tagesmütter* in Germany was characterised by holding occupational qualifications related to the work with children. A general lower educational profile compared to women of the former GDR could not be shown. That there are so many German women with childcare training is the outcome of mass-redundancy of childcare workers in day centres after the German unification. In this case 'what the market throws up', as Jackson and Jackson (1979) described the recruitment of childminders in the 1970s turns out to be a bargain for parents and the *Jugendamt*. A place at a *Tagesmutter* costs less money independent of whether the *Tagesmutter* holds the same occupational qualifications as the staff in day centres.

The business opportunities of family day care providers are determined by restrictions arising out of the regulations of childcare. The prescribed adult child ratios – with the safety of children and the quality of care in mind – constitute the most severe curtailing of business opportunities. This effect is reinforced by the availability of other childcare provisions. The outcome is that childminders and *Tagesmütter* command very low incomes. In England the hourly income earned is well below the national minimum wage, and below wages paid to childcare workers in public settings. A trained childcare worker in Germany can command a considerably higher wage than the average income of a *Tagesmutter*, and the rate earned by *Tagesmütter*, for example, was below that of the going rate of a cleaner[1]. The inability to fix higher rates of pay for their caring work is rooted in the context of the weak labour market position of women with lower education and qualifications. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 have shown that English working conditions are characterised by fragmentation and insecurity, compared to German working conditions that are characterised by long working days and weeks and, to a slightly lesser extent, by insecurity. Both are the outcome of policies governing childcare provision in

general and family day care in particular. The representativeness of the working conditions of English childminders is confirmed by very similar results of a study of childminders in other locations in England (Mooney et al. 2001).

The exploration of family day care providers' business opportunities and working conditions revealed an analytical problem. Work undertaken in a private space appears to be more difficult to identify and differentiate than work in a public space. This is because opportunities to engage in other, private activities than paid work can be assumed to be more numerous than in public settings. At the same time what the homeworker is actually doing is less visible – engaging in paid work, unpaid domestic labour or unpaid care. The acknowledgement that family day care providers engage in paid care for minded children and unpaid childcare for their own children simultaneously makes a definition of paid working time necessary. Two possible definitions have been offered in Chapter 5, allowing to differentiate between 'attendance time' and 'start-stop time'. 'Attendance time' is the time anyone of the minded children is in the care of the family day care provider. The 'start-stop time' of a working day begins when the first minded child becomes the responsibility of the family day care provider and ends when the last minded child leaves. This distinction helps firstly to emphasise the difficulties of defining of what the paid work of a childminder or *Tagesmutter* entails and secondly of evaluating their earning power.

Subsidising childcare is the most interesting lever of policy able to impact on family day care providers working conditions. In the German context the Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in effect fixes the rates for family day care falling outside the responsibility of the *Jugendamt* by fixing costs of childcare in the public and the not-for-profit sector, including the proportion of subsidy and the maximum of parents' contribution. The connection of good childcare provision in general and the availability of subsidy leaves no demand for a poorly paid, self regulated private market of family day care. The better income security compared to childminders is not so much due to a political commitment to improve the working conditions of *Tagesmütter*, but an unintended consequence of policy to support parents implemented in a particular way. The *Jugendamt* pays at least 70 per cent of the costs – in order to support parents in their child-raising role. This subsidy is paid monthly to the service provider. It results in regular, reliable payments and a longer period of notice, compared to English childminders.

The insecurity of income earned from childminding in England is also an outcome of policies regulating childminding and the values attached to other forms of childcare provision. It may be difficult to fill vacancies because parents' requirements may not fit into the complicated pattern of established childcare commitments for other people's children and the childminder's own. There are two other interrelated factors that contribute to the difficulties to fill vacancies in England: Firstly Social Services are not involved in making contracts. They are only informed about vacancies if childminders choose to do so. Secondly, a lot of childcare arrangements come from word of mouth, requiring that the childminder is part of a network in which this information is passed on. The empirical material from Germany shows that *Tagesmütter* are not as much restricted by commitments of being in certain places at certain times. Places on offer are most of the time full-time places. Since the *Jugendamt* is involved in setting-up childcare arrangements due to the subsidy paid to parents, and because one of its functions is to help parents finding a suitable *Tagesmutter*, the information available to the *Jugendamt* about vacancies is up to date and can complement finding children by word of mouth.

The challenge by parents and their children to the private domain comes in the form of necessity to define the role of the childcare provider. I have argued before that the difficulties of defining two of the private roles women take – the role of housewife and the role of mother – become even more apparent when introducing the role of family day care provider. This is so, because the tasks arising of these three roles are interlinked and because it is difficult to classify the motivation to engage in any activity as either situated in the housewife's role or the mothering role. Taking on work as a family day care provider quickly shows itself to be more than just tucking another child under one's motherly wings. It means forming a childcare triangle of parents, child and childcare provider within which different kinds of relationships between the members have to be formed. Chapter 6, 7 and 8 examined the challenges to the private domain by parents and their children from different angles.

Debates about care have circled around the difficulties in describing and defining it. Chapter 6 provides a description of care based on the reports of working day routines by childminders and *Tagesmütter*. It shows a significant impact of cultural and social norms and prevailing constructions of childhood on childcare practices of family day care providers. They operate on the wider level of childcare provision and the perception what

is beneficial for children and on the individual level on what childminders and *Tagesmütter* perceive to be good care and essential physical needs of children.

The examination of daily work routines also shows that decisions how to structure a working day taken by childminders and *Tagesmütter* are limited. Restrictions are situated at different levels reaching from determinants that cannot be altered by the childminder or *Tagesmutter* to the family day care provider's free decision. The emerging hierarchy of determinants of work routines shows on Level one parent's needs for childcare, on Level two the determinants arising out of other childcare provisions, on Level three perceived physiological needs of children and on the last level, Level four, children's educational and social needs as perceived by the childminder or *Tagesmutter*. Each higher level has to be compatible with the previous level or levels. It emerged that childminders working routines are particularly restricted by Level two commitments compared to *Tagesmütter* whose working days were more likely to be structured around the perceived physical needs of children.

The relationship with children can only develop on the basis of activities. At the initial stage 'care' consists of the activities for or with the child. *Tagesmütter* and childminders with childcare training are most likely to have knowledge of child development, experience in caring for other people's children and experience of communicating with parents, gained before becoming a family day care provider. Childminders and *Tagesmütter* without childcare training are more likely to rely on their knowledge and experience gained through motherhood.

Deciding on care activities demands reflexivity on childcare practices and on parental rights by family day care provider and parents alike. It means that two members of the childcare triangle have to agree on the details of the care provided. In England and in Germany strong notions of parental rights and obligations exist. Yet how these translate into the daily work of family day care providers is contested. In Chapter 7 we have seen that the stance taken by family day care providers and their perception of parents' approach can vary considerably. Claims to the power of making daily childcare decisions can turn into the breeding ground of conflicts. Family day care providers may feel that the details of care provided have to be guided by parental wishes and specifications, or they may assume the authority to define the form childcare takes is based on their experience as family day care providers, on their professional training, or on their experience as mothers. Childminders or *Tagesmütter* may perceive parents as having the right and duty

to specify the details of family day care, as trusting the decisions of the family day care provider or as lacking interest. The potential of conflicts threatening childcare arrangements could be reduced if details of care and claims of the right to decide are clarified before a contract is signed.

The empirical material presented in Chapter 7 shows that developing a relationship with parents that is conducive to a working childcare triangle is like walking a tightrope. A successful relationship with parents is based on the family day care provider's ability to manage all aspects of family day care. This is supported by an approach taken that respondents couched it in the term 'professional'. It reflects the need to find the right balance of distance and friendship concerning three aspects of family day care. This services is offered by childminders and *Tagesmütter* to enable parents to go out to work, it provides childcare and is delivered through a business relationship. 'Professionalism' is supported by the use of contracts; by knowledge of child development, care and education and by supporting parents in their choice of using childcare. To stand up for one's business interests, to provide good quality childcare and to strike the right relationship with parents are all subsumed under the label 'professional' by childminders and *Tagesmütter*. Family day care providers appear to pick up eagerly the discourse offered by the National Childminding Association and the *Tagesmütter* Association. The aim of these associations in the name of family day care providers is to improve the status of family day care.

The unique characteristic of family day care is that it is very unlikely that relationships are restricted to the three parties of the childcare triangle. Location, motivation and practicalities hinder a clear separation of public work and private family life. Other members of the household are affected and are drawn into the work of their mothers or their wife. This means that the private relationship between the mother working in family day care and her children becomes more visible and is directly challenged by requirements arising from paid work. Chapter 8 shows the tension faced by family day care providers emerging from the perceived work requirement of 'treating all the children the same' and from the wish to protecting the special mother-child relationship, including the privacy of their own children. Particularly young children are drawn into providing family day care. Older children and husbands are better equipped to protect their private space and privacy. From this position they may choose to which extent to become involved with the looked-after children and their parents.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 show that the openness of the family day care provider's household or the determination to maintain a division between private family home and public childcare provision varies considerably. Some family day care providers perceive an extension of their family and becoming the extension to another family as a positive outcome of their self-employment. This includes cared for children and their parents. Others like to keep their private lives separate. The ultimate cut-off point is reached when childminders or *Tagesmütter* contemplate working jointly with another family day care provider. This cannot take place in the private family home. A clear separation is necessary where the other care provider is kept out of the private domain.

It is important for the working conditions of family day care providers that the lifecycle of their family also impacts on their working conditions. The age of the household's children impact on the service offered to parents and the form childcare takes. It also restricts in the English context business opportunities by including the childminder's own children in the adult-child ratio. As children grow up the form of this impact changes. The more permeable the boundary defining the private family domain is to challenges arising out of the care of other people's children the stronger is the destabilising effect of children growing up or other changes within the household. Thus *Tagesmütter* who were able to clearly separate private space and (public) family day care space can maintain the physical working environment independent from their children. It includes that the family day care provider's children or husband can challenge the public work domain, and, if they wish to, benefit from it, by developing friendships with children and parents.

This research is about women, because childcare including family day care is one of the occupations almost entirely undertaken by women and for women. The construction of gender in England and in the unified Germany can be detected throughout. Their (future) reproductive role permeates the structures of constraint on every level. It appears that working as a childminder or *Tagesmutter* confirms traditional gendered role allocating childcare and housework to women. Of course this supports individual women using this services in gaining a better position in the labour market. Yet the provision of childcare alone (whether cheap or expensive) is not able to provide mothers with the same opportunities as men and fathers. A claim that mothers buying family day care provision exploit childminders and *Tagesmütter* seems to ignore how deep the gendered division within societies runs.

Conceptual development

What makes researching family day care so interesting – and so challenging – is the unique position of these self-employed childminders and *Tagesmütter* in relation to the public and the private. At the beginning I proposed to use concepts of the public and the private as research tools despite, for example, the ambiguity arising out of that market can be conceptualised as private in contrast to the public state, or as public in contrast to the private household (Jennings 1993). The interrelated concepts of the private and the public proved to be useful because it allowed asking questions about power emerging in relationships developing in family day care arrangements. Defining space, actions or relationships as private signals the inappropriateness of interference from outside. Defining space, actions or relationships as public prepares the ground for the possibility or even necessity of interference by others. The childcare triangle family day care presents ample opportunities for the contestation of the boundaries between public and private. They are played out at the level of state regulation of family day, but also at the level of care and the relationship between family day care provider and parents. A closer look at the contests show also how the public and the private are constructed.

The challenge to the private domain of the family day care provider from social services (particularly in England) is a by-product of regulations implemented to protect children and to safeguard a minimum of quality of paid childcare. There is no overt intention by policy makers regulating childminding to alter family practices concerning parents and their own children. However, the empirical material presented in Chapter 8 shows that the relationship between parents and their own children is influenced by childminding regulations. This is not surprising. Safety measures geared towards minded children, rules concerning behaviour management (like non-smacking rules) and expectations about the fulfilment of basic physical needs cannot easily be adhered to selectively, only for other people's children. For England the introduction of *National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding* (Department for Education and Employment 2001c) from September 2001 shows an attempt by the government to step back from challenging the boundary of the private domain of childminders. With the consent of parents childminders are allowed to smack children in their care or smoke in their presence. In no other childcare setting is this acceptable. Margaret Hodge, Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, offered an explanation for this difference: "as childminding is a

more informal setting the Government shouldn't have to regulate on what people can and can't do in their own homes" (Department for Education and Employment 2000e).

The German government appears to be even less willing to be involved in private arrangements between parents and *Tagesmutter* or in the set-up of care arrangements in the privacy of the family day care provider's home. As long as there are less than four children in the care of the *Tagesmutter* and no refund by the *Jugendamt* is paid, the *Jugendamt* is not involved. The rationale behind this argues for parental rights and ability to choose the right setting of the family seeking childcare. Yet when public money is involved the *Jugendamt* has to insure that the money is well spent on suitable childcare.

On the level of the relationship between family day care providers and parents an important site of contest are everyday childcare decision. If family day care providers accept that parents have the right to establish how their children are looked after then it will affect the experience of the family day care provider's own child. The difficulties to establish two sets of rules during the working day, one for the minded children and one for the family day care provider's child support this.

Another site where the definition of the relationship between the family day care provider and parents is contested is that of the tension between establishing a formal business relationship and developing friendship. Throughout the empirical material kinship labels were borrowed to describe and to define roles and relationships. Although in Germany the colloquial term for the family day care provider literally translates as day mother (or if the family day care provider is a man as day father) respondents were more reluctant to describe themselves as 'nearly mothers' or as 'nearly sister' or 'nearly aunts' to the members of the families using their services. When they were talking about the relationship between the children in their care and their own these labels were used more readily. It points to the difficulties of defining this relationship. Neither in Germany nor in England exists a term that comfortably describes a caring and friendship relationship between unrelated adults and children.

By defining their relationship to children childminders and *Tagesmütter* draw on their experience as mothers and as childcare workers. It is interesting that experience of how to relate to and care for children can be transported from public childcare settings to the private domain of the family day care provider's home. It is also possible that the public, paid-for provision of family day care is informed by the experience gained in private

relationships. It is an indicator for the permeable boundaries of the public and the private by individuals.

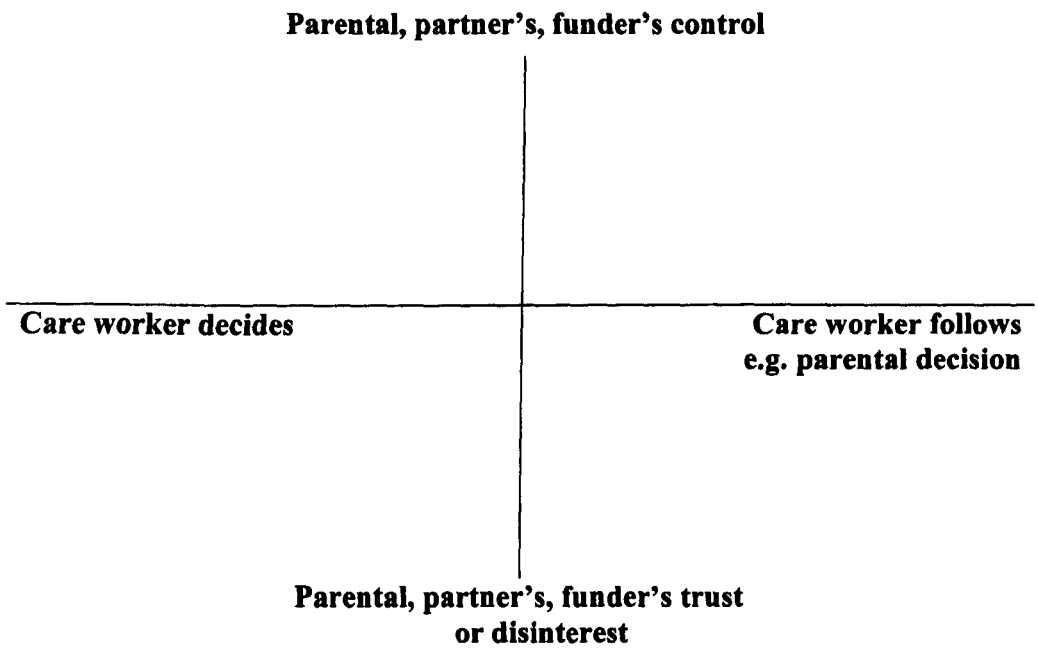
Another question thrown up by the fuzziness of the boundary between the public and the private is that of whether family day care is in the true meaning of the expression possible. Children are not cared for in the same way as their mother would care for them. They do not become family members of the family day care provider's household. Space used for childminding has to be altered to be fit for childminding. Conflicts appear to be easier to avoid if childminders and *Tagesmütter* keep some distance. When *Tagesmütter* move further away from a work definition similar to mothering, for example by using separate rooms or working jointly with another *Tagesmutter* they feel that they can offer better care and appear quite satisfied with their working conditions.

The observation that individuals make use of private experience and roles in public domains and vice versa takes us back to the difficulty in defining care and evaluating whether payment for care alters the quality of care delivered or the relationship between carer and cared for (Folbre 1995; Himmelweit 1995; Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). One motivation for becoming a childminder or a *Tagesmutter* was the need to earn money. Yet the analysis of their daily work routines or how relationships develop this motivation did not appear to play a role. Relationships with children can only develop over time on the basis of activities – whether the care provider is unpaid or paid, paid poorly or generously. However, the need of earning money and the poor income that can be earned with family day care may push women in other, better-paid forms of employment.

Let us return to one area of contest between family day care provider and parents, that of care decisions. This has been used to define the boundary between the public and private by establishing who can claim the right to take these decisions. A clarification of the position of the care provider, the care buyer or organiser who is not the cared for in caring triangles seems to be an important tool for avoiding conflicts. A combination of this model with the model of hierarchy of work routines allows studying family day care in different locations and within different legal frameworks. It can be used for a cross-national comparison of family day care providers' social and economic experience. The emphasis lies on the family day care provider and her working conditions. Evidently it may also be a starting point to examine the quality of childcare provision.

The model of distinct care decisions developed in Chapter 7 can be adapted to examine care decisions in other triangular care relationships (Figure 9.1). Here the family day care provider is replaced with a care worker, either in a private or a public setting, either paid or unpaid. The vertical axis ranges from the extreme control to the extremes trust or disinterest. The involved person is one part of the care triangle, making claims to decide on care provided based on kinship, friendship or financial contribution.

Figure 9.1: The structure of care decisions



The model gains analytical strength when it is positioned in the context of the hierarchy of determinants of work routines, as developed in Chapter 6. It aims to develop the hierarchy of determinants from 'beyond the control' of to 'free to choose' for the family day care provider. A combination of the framework of care decisions with the model of the hierarchy of determinants of work routines would have to include the determinants arising, for example out of institutional organisation, decisions taken by senior staff, professionals etc. It may turn out that for example, physical needs of the cared-for take a different position within this hierarchy.

Policy insights

Constantly declining numbers of childminders and places have coincided with the planning and implementation of considerable changes to the framework of childminding and other childcare provision, with an increase of the government's financial support of parents and the introduction of the national Minimum Wage. The group of women most likely to take up childminding – those with young children – has shown the sharpest increase in entering employment outside the home (Twomey 2001) and may not be available to become childminders anymore. Prospective childminders may shy away from self-employment regulated by Ofsted – with its negative reputation of being harsh school inspectors (e.g. Smithers 2001) – and the possible expectation to provide education as member of a recognised childminder network (National Childminding Association 1998b). Neither fit in with the idea of working as a childminder as stop-gap until one's own children have grown more independent as 28 per cent of the 163 active childminders did. Additionally the conditions of finding a balance of paid and unpaid work have been altered. An increasing number of Out of School Clubs and Nursery places improves the accessibility of childcare provision and a combination of the national Minimum Wage and Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) including Childcare Tax Credit (CCTC) may render formal, private-market childcare affordable.

Less than half (44 per cent) of the 122 English respondents (of 163 active childminders) who wrote about their future had an optimistic outlook. Nineteen per cent planned to continue but felt that the competition from other childcare providers, including childminders was extensive and that there was not enough work to go round. The rest (37 per cent in all) planned to return to paid work outside the house (18 per cent), to stop (10 per cent), or to enter a career in childcare (9 per cent).

The British context of CCTC paid to parents as part of the WFTC through the wage package is set up to improve the household income of parents using formal childcare. The administrative set-up – parents apply every six months, anticipating needed hours – leaves childminders with a commitment to provide services, but without income security. Parents may decide not to use the childminder's services. Also childminders cannot increase their charges on grounds of parents' anticipated opportunity to receive reimbursement of some of the costs. Firstly only low-income families are eligible. Secondly a differentiated rate structure would demand that childminders gain information about the financial situation of parents looking for childcare. Family day care providers

find that difficult. Thirdly, raising rates carries always the danger of pricing oneself out of the market.

The majority of the 19 German respondents noting down their thoughts about the future (14 *Tagesmütter* or 74 per cent) had an optimistic outlook on continuing their work in family day care. Sixteen per cent planned to take up other paid work and 11 per cent planned to stop when the child in their care had outgrown the need for family day care and could attend a kindergarten. Becoming a *Tagesmutter* had less the purpose to bridge the difficulty of finding a balance between childcare commitments and paid work. A high proportion of *Tagesmütter* in the former East Germany consists of trained childcare workers. Taking up family day care appeared to the respondents to be the only way of working with children – an occupation they had chosen as their career and work they love. With their background in childcare they find it less difficult to register as family day care provider. These women strive to move their practice of family day care closer to mini nurseries. They have experience of an institutional setting and are clear about advantages and disadvantages. They may be able to carve out a niche of self-employment in childcare, offering a small-scale setting and more flexibility to a lower price to parents. It remains to be seen whether this pool of unemployed, trained childcare workers dries up, whether new *Tagesmütter* will be recruited from the 'traditional' pool of mothers with lower educational and occupational qualification or whether a good provision of childcare facilities including subsidy paid to parents will lead to a slow decline of *Tagesmütter*.

The comparison of the business opportunities of childminders and *Tagesmütter* has shown that subsidising childcare at the point of provision secures income and can contribute to the stability of childcare arrangements. It also can in effect fix rates paid to family day care providers and increase the income of individual women. A further improvement could be achieved by a clearer definition of core times and overtime. This definition can be developed referring to the definitions 'start-stop time and with that could include the times when parents are there to pick their children up and talk to the family day care provider.

It seems to be very unlikely that the British government is prepared to switch from means-tested subsidy of childcare costs paid to parents to a universal subsidy paid to the childcare provider. Policy makers may perceive it as an undue interference with private market forces. However, the position childminders and childminding networks occupy within the National Childcare Strategy and the unwillingness by the government to

subsidise running costs of childcare provision in general suggest childminders are preferred because they are inexpensive and particularly useful to fill childcare gaps. Yet to increase the number of childminders it needs more than financial support in the form of start-up grants (Department for Education and Employment 2000a). The introduction of the Minimum Wage has strengthened women's earning power and it may be more difficult to take advantage of their difficulties to reconcile production and reproduction. This is supported by a considerable change of public attitudes towards the role of mothers and a shift to see citizens, whether male or female, as working.

An extension of *Land* laws regulating the subsidy and support of *Tagesmütter* in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to all *Länder* of the unified Germany would be desirable. Yet this seems very unlikely to happen particularly in the old *Länder*, where traditional ideals of the 'breadwinner' model, at least for families with young children, are strong within the population and politics. Attitudes towards gender roles are shifting – in the *Länder* of the former West Germany towards viewing the role of mother compatible with the role of worker, women's commitment to paid work in the *Länder of* the former East Germany remains strong. This results in different scopes to introduce or cancel subsidies for childcare in the new and old *Länder*. Comparatively high rates of unemployment and national debt are in the German context seen as a reason rather to deter women from entering the labour market.

However, even when governments are not inclined to establish policies to secure and improve family day care working conditions and income there is an interest to stabilise childcare arrangements. Many measures could help family day care providers walking the tightrope of the multifaceted relationship triangle. They may include contract forms available to all childminders and *Tagesmütter* consistently setting out areas of agreements. It may be useful to provide family day care providers and parents alike with a list of childcare decisions that should be agreed upon before the contract is signed. An extension of training and support, perhaps delivered in the child care provider's home, may benefit a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of family day care.

Policy makers themselves need to take on board the involvement of other members of the household and the role they take in family day care. Particularly the role of the family day care provider's children needs attention. They too may benefit from having access to an

initial information session and the opportunity to talk about their experience as temporary replacement sibling.

Compared to the findings and suggestions of how to improve childminding and day care emerging in the late 1970s the issues have not changed. Support in the form of more training, of childminders' connection to nurseries, of extensive toy-libraries and access to domestic services, or the employment of a family day care provider helping out in emergencies (see Chapter 1) are not or only achieved to a very limited extent. These forms of support would drive the price of family day care up and may involve the state into this form of childcare provision at a level policy makers are not comfortable with. The same has to be assumed for another possible direction to be taken. The employment of family day care providers, as in some of the Nordic countries (Karlsson 1995), would solve much of the problems arising out of insecure working conditions. Yet again, employing family day care providers does not come cheap. Additionally it may deter many potential childminders and *Tagesmütter* who see this form of self-employment as a stop-gap solution to achieve a balance of work and care in a particular life-course situation of their household.

Research to be done

The comparative study of family day care providers' economic and social experience offers many starting points for further research. It would be interesting to turn this study into longitudinal research. This would help to further understand the different development of a sharp decline of childminders in contrast to the increase of *Tagesmütter*. In England the effects of the introduction of childcare subsidy for low-income parents, of the introduction of National Childcare Standards and of the increased provision of other forms of childcare besides childminding, its numbers and its form are interesting. The German development of a 'niche' occupation for trained childcare workers deserves attention. Further exploration need to look at the differences in overt intentions of policies, unintended effects and the role of implementation and administration of policies.

This research has focused on one person in the family day care provider's household: the self-employed childminder or *Tagesmutter*. It could not and did not ignore other members of the household and their involvement in providing childcare. Further research would benefit from studying family day care on the household level. The characteristics of family day care as providing care for children suggest the need for researching children's

perspective of being the 'nearly' sibling of other people's children. It would be interesting to explore the extent to which family day care providers' children experience this challenge to their privacy as a positive extension of their family or as an intrusion. Additionally of interest is whether children perceive a change of their relationship with their mother and if so, what this entails. Apart from creating knowledge about family day care as such, it would look at care from a different angle. Similar research could be conducted with the husband or partner of family day care providers.

This study has compared family day care providers in two locations. They had in common that they were registered and self-employed. The differences are found in the structures of constraints women face and in the legal and policy framework of family day care. The legal and policy frameworks in the two samples were as far apart as possible. This allowed developing analytical tools to examine family day care. This framework could be applied to family day care in other contexts as well as allowing comparison of the social and economic experience of e.g. unregistered or employed family day care providers.

Another benefit of this piece of research is that it has started to disentangle issues in 'care triangles'. This needs further exploration. From one perspective this demands the inclusion of parents' and children's opinion and experience. Yet it also can be approached from comparing care triangles in different settings. Obviously following from this study care triangles in other informal and formal childcare arrangements are of interest. Yet an extension to other care triangles, involving other than children as the beneficiary of care appear promising. Again this would help to refine definitions of care and work.

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[1] The going rate for cleaners is DM 15 or £5.35. Although cleaners ought to be employed there exists a huge grey market (Gottschaldt 2001)

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Appendix 1: Glossary

German expression, abbreviation	Translation	Explanation
Erzieher *Erzieherin* (female) *Kindergartenerzieherin*	(educator)	Three year training at vocational school, often another year practice attached. Emphasis on work with children 3 – 6. Also trained to work with younger and older children, and young adults.
FRG German abbreviation: *BRD – Bundesrepublik Deutschland*	Federal Republic of Germany	Name of the former West Germany and now of the unified Germany
GDR German abbreviation: *DDR – Deutsche Demokratische Republik*	German Democratic Republic	Former East Germany, unified with BRD in 1990
Hort	(sanctuary)	Day care facility for school children, usually caters for children up to 14 years. Full-time during school holidays, otherwise wrap-around services
Jugendamt	Youth services	Responsible for childcare facilities, services supporting families and children, supporting families and children in need, supporting young adults. Also adoption, foster care and guardianship
Kindergarten	kindergarten	Day care facility for children 3 – 6 years. In former West Germany usually part-time or with longer lunch break. In former East Germany full-time care
Kinderpfleger *Kinderpflegerin* (female)	(child carer)	Two year training at vocational school. Emphasis on work with children up to the third birthday. Also work under Erzieherin in day centres of kindergarten.
KJHG *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegessetz*	The Child and Youth Services Act, Social Code Book VIII	Similar to the Children Act 1989. Legal framework for all issues connected to children and young persons.
Krippe	(crèche)	Day care facility for children up to the third birthday. Often linked to day centre for older children
Krippenerziehering (female)		Childcare training course in former GDR, three years. Emphasis on children up to the third birthday
Land *Länder* (plural)	(county)	Germany is a federal state. It consists of 16 Länder. The Länder have rights and responsibilities as a result of being a constitutional part of the Federation. Within the scope of the Federation's framework regulations, certain legislative areas are left to the Länder.
Landesjugendamt	Youth services on Land level	responsible to for preparing legislation, supporting projects and developing youth services policy at the level of the Land
Tagesmutter *Tagesmütter* (plural)	childminder	Self-employed, up to three children no need to register (own children are not included), can also work in child's home

Appendix 2: Overview of the samples

Table A 1: Sample and return rates

	Durham	Gateshead	Newcastle	Sunderland	Rostock	Total
Questionnaires sent out N	147	107	120	102	40	515
Questionnaires returned N (%)	67 (46%)	42 (39%)	52 (43%)	44 (43%)	20 (50%)	225 (44%)
% of registered childminders represented by returned questionnaires	15%	12%	9%	12%	50%	13%
Childminders agreed to be interviewed N (% of returned questionnaires)	15 (22%)	10 (24%)	19 (37%)	10 (23%)	12 (60%)	66 (29%)

Table A 2: Activity rate of childminders in England

	Active		No children		Given up		Retired and other*		Total	
	N	Row %	N	Row %	N	Row %	N	Row %	N	%
Durham	57	85	5	8	5	8	0		67	100
Gateshead	32	76	6	14	3	7	1	2	42	100
Newcastle	41	79	8	15	1	2	2	4	52	100
Sunderland	33	75	5	11	6	14	0		44	100
Total	163	80	24	12	15	7	3	1	205	100

* One childminder was registered but provided foster care instead. Another childminder was registered in order to being able to provide emergency care for children of women suffering domestic violence.

All of the registered German *Tagesmütter* were active. This reflects that monthly lists compiled by the *Jugendamt* are the *Tagesmütter* receiving subsidy.

The sample of 205 registered childminders in the Northeast of England

Table A 3: Age and length worked of registered childminders in the Northeast of England

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	179	26	24 - 62	39	38
Length worked	182	23	1 month – 20 years	5 years	4 years

Table A 4: Personal circumstances and attitudes of registered childminders in the Northeast of England

	Yes		No		Missing data
	N	%	N	%	
Living with children	174	95	10	5	21
Married/living with partner	167	91	17	9	21
Holding childcare qualification	53	31	115	69	37
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	58	42	79	58	68
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	54	39	83	61	68

The sample of 20 registered *Tagesmütter* in Rostock

Table A 5: Age and length worked of registered *Tagesmütter* in Rostock

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	20	0	21 - 60	37	35
Length worked	20	0	5 month – 20 years	3 years	1.5 years

Table A 6: Personal circumstances of registered *Tagesmütter* in Rostock

	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Living with children	14	70	6	30
Married/living with partner	18	90	2	10
Holding childcare qualification	12	60	8	40
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	14	70	6	30
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	6	30	14	70

The sample of 67 registered childminders in Durham

Table A 7: Age and length worked of registered childminders in Durham

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	62	5	24 - 59	38	38
Length worked	62	5	3 month – 17 years	4 years and 7 month	3 years and 3 month

Table A 8: Personal circumstances and attitudes of registered childminders in Durham

	Yes		No		Missing data
	N	%	N	%	
Living with children	60	95	3	5	4
Married/living with partner	58	92	5	8	4
Holding childcare qualification	17	29	42	71	8
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	17	35	31	65	19
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	17	35	31	65	19

The sample of 42 registered childminders in Gateshead

Table A 9: Age and length worked of registered childminders in Gateshead

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	35	7	26 - 56	38	37
Length worked	36	6	1 month – 14 years	4 years and 7 month	4 years

Table A 10: Personal circumstances and attitudes of registered childminders in Gateshead

	Yes		No		Missing data
	N	%	N	%	N
Living with children	34	94	2	6	6
Married/living with partner	35	97	1	3	6
Holding childcare qualification	6	18	27	82	9
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	18	60	12	40	12
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	9	30	21	70	12

The sample of 52 registered childminders in Newcastle

Table A 11: Age and length worked of registered childminders in Newcastle

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	45	7	26 - 61	40	41
Length worked	47	5	1 month – 20 years	5 years and 10 month	4 years

Table A 12: Personal circumstances and attitudes of registered childminders in Newcastle

	Yes		No		Missing data
	N	%	N	%	
Living with children	44	94	3	6	5
Married/living with partner	39	83	8	17	5
Holding childcare qualification	23	52	21	48	8
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	14	40	21	60	17
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	17	49	18	51	17

The sample of 44 registered childminders in Sunderland

Table A 13: Age and length worked of registered childminders in Sunderland

	Number	Missing data	Range	Mean	Median
Age	37	7	25 - 62	41	40
Length worked	37	7	1 month – 17 years	5 years and 5 month	5 years

Table A 14: Personal circumstances and attitudes of registered childminders in Sunderland

	Yes		No		Missing data
	N	%	N	%	
Living with children	36	95	2	5	6
Married/living with partner	35	92	3	8	6
Holding childcare qualification	23	72	9	8	12
Seeing the future as childminder optimistic	25	62	9	38	20
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	11	46	13	54	20

The samples compared

Table A 15: A comparison of the English and German samples

	Survey UK	Survey Germany	Interviews UK (N = 10)	Interviews Germany (N = 10)
	March 1998	Feb 1999	June/July 1998	Oct. 98/ May 99
Age:				
Mean	39	37	39	37
Range	24 - 62	21 - 60	27 - 51	28 - 44
Length worked				
Mean	5.3	3	6.5	4.2
Range	1 month – 20 years	5 month – 20 years	1 – 18 years	8 month – 20 years
Median length worked	4	1.5		
Family day care providers married, living with partner	91 %	90 %	9 out of 10	all
Family day care provider living with own children	95 %	70 %	8 out of 10	all
Women with childcare training	31 %	60%	1 out of 10	6 out of 10
Seeing the future as family day care provider optimistic	42 %	70 %	6 out of 10	8 out of 10
Intending to stop family day care in the near future	39 %	30 %	3 out of 10	1 out of 10

Interviewees

Table A 16: The interviewees in alphabetical order

Name country	Length worked	Age	Family	Age when started	Children's age when started	Training, work experience
Alison England	8 years	33	Married/partner sons 3, 8	25	not born, just born	Office work
Almut Germany	4 years	40	Married/partner sons 15, 20	36	11, 16	Kindergärtnerin
Angela England	1 year	32	Married/partner daughter 4	31	3	Hair dresser, shop manager
Anke Germany	5 years	30	Married/partner sons 9 daughters 6, 12	25	1, 4, 7	Specialised sales assistant
Astrid Germany	1 1/2 years	34	Married/partner son 7 daughter 4 weeks	32	not born, 5	Kindergärtnerin
Birgit Germany	2 years	42	Married/partner son 19 daughter (left home)	40	17	Childcare assistant, elder care assistant
Christiane Germany	1 1/2 years	42	Married/partner about to adopt son, 8	40	foster child 6	Kinderpflegerin
Dagmar Germany	11 years	35	Married/partner sons 11, 13 daughter 9	24	not born, baby, 2	Computer programmer, Accountant
Deborah England	15 years	48	Married/partner sons 17, 19 daughter 21	33	2, 4, 6	Several unskilled jobs
Evelyn England	2 years	39	Single daughter 4	37	2	Hotel work, elderly care, police work
Inge Germany	5 month	31	Married/partner son 3 daughter 1	30	6 month, 3	Special needs teacher
Ivy England	18 years	51	Married / partner son 22 (left)	33	4	Office work

Name country	Length worked	Age	Family	Age when started	Children's age when started	Training, work experience
Karin Germany	20 years	44	Married/partner son 24 (left) daughter 21	24	1, 4	Kindergärtnerin
Laura England	5 years	42	Separated son 7 daughters 14, 18	37	2, 9, 13	Office work, insurance, elderly care
Liz England	5 years	38	Married/partner daughters 14, 17	33	9, 12	NNEB
Louise England	3 years	31	Married/partner son 4,7 daughter 6	28	1, 3, 4	Office work, sales assistant
Margaret England	6 years	49	Married/partner daughters 21 23 (both left)	43	15, 17	Dental Nurse
Monika Germany	2 years	39	Married/partner sons 12, 18	37	10, 16	Erzieherin
Ruth England	2 years	27	Married/partner sons 4, 4month	25	not born, 2	worked as nanny, sales representative for family business
Ursula Germany	8 month	28	Married/partner son 8 daughter2	27	1, 7	Office work

Appendix 3: The legal framework of family day care

Britain

Shortly after the Second World War childminding received a legal framework. A series of house fires in which children died while their childminder was out shopping led to a newspaper campaign in late 1940. This campaign influenced the drafting of the Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act 1948. For the first time minimum standards for paid childminders were required. The Act was mainly concerned with children's health and safety issues. Twenty years later a similar campaign filtered through to the childminding section of the 1968 Health Services and Public Health Act. From that point on all childminders – not only those caring for three or more children – have to register with their Local Authority (Jackson and Jackson 1979).

In 1991 the Children Act 1989 came into effect. This Act provides a legal context for relationships between children and their carers. It contains a consistent framework for regulating all forms of substitute care (Masson 1994). The regulations regarding childminding fixed in the Children Act 1989 builds upon the provisions of the Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act 1948 that it replaces (Bell 1990). The registration system is stronger than that of the 1948 Act, with Local Authorities assuming responsibility for determining the registration conditions for child minders and for conducting annual inspections. (Bell 1990).

Childminders are self-employed. Yet their working conditions and business opportunities are regulated and restricted by the Children Act 1989. Before a childminder can begin to offer childcare services to parents she has to prove that she is a 'fit' person to look after children and that the premises where care is going to take place are suitable. Guidance and Regulations advise Local Authorities on how to meet the requirements of the Children Act 1989 (Department of Health 1991). It is proposed that the Local Authorities should both work closely with other departments (e.g. education, fire, police.) and establish minimum standards of 'fit' persons and suitable premises (Department of Health 1991). For the prospective childminder this means providing evidence that she has experience with children (usually her own). Additionally she must grant permission to the police to disclose criminal records and other 'intelligence' information (Hebenton and Thomas 1992) related to her and others over the age of 16 living in her household[1], and to

her General Practitioner to disclose information about her health. She may also be obliged to participate in a pre-registration or First Aid course.

A successful registration will leave the childminder with a limit on the number of children she can look after at any one time. This includes her own children. Usually childminders have permission to look after six children under the age of eight. Of those no more than three should be under the age of five. Furthermore childminders are bound to comply with requirements concerning the premises. This may entail the alteration of certain features or the exemption of use of certain spaces for the use of childminding. The childminder may also have to show that she owns or has access to appropriate toys for different age groups. Other requirements concern record keeping about children in her care.

The Children Act 1989 demands annual inspections on which occasion the fitness of the person and the suitability of the premises are assessed and may be subjected to further requirements of the Local Authority. Childminders bear the costs of the inspections[2]. From September 2001 the new Early Years Directorate of OfSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) will be responsible for registration and inspection. The aims and objectives of this change are the establishment of consistent standards in England and fixed in the Care Standards Act 2000.

Money received for childminding is treated like any other taxable income. Childminders make use of their personal allowance and can offset a certain proportion of their fuel bills and rent as well as a sum for wear and tear against tax.

The obligation of local authorities to provide appropriate childcare for children in need (section 17) shifts the emphasis from child protection to family support which, in turn, may lead Social Services to choose registered childminders to provide 'sponsored childminding' (Statham 1996). Children in need placed with sponsored childminders may include children who are in need of protection or are at risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, children whose social and intellectual development is being impaired and children who are disabled or who have parents who are ill or disabled or unable to provide suitable social/emotional stimulation. Currently, sponsored day care has developed into a service offered only part-time and as crisis intervention for limited period. When the need is met the service is withdrawn, because there are always others in need (Statham et al. 2000).

Germany

With the new *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* (*KJHG*)family day care emerged from its shadowy existence (Stranz 1996). The *KJHG* moved family day care from being a means of provision for children in need (due to a shortcoming in parental care) to a means of supporting children's development – irrespective of the quality of care provided by parents (Münder et al. 1993). The purposeful placement of the regulation of family day care (paragraph 23) in the section of the *KJHG* that regulates day care provision for children has been interpreted as an acknowledgement of family day care as alternative to institutional care (Lakies 1996)[3]. The German policy framework does not provide a tool for moving family day care closer to educational provision as recent developments in Britain. Within the National Childcare Strategy attempts are made to develop childminding net-works which are able to attract funding for Early Years Education (National Childminding Association 1998b).

The *KJHG* states that family day care providers do not have to seek permission from the *Jugendamt* as long as they look after three children or less, excluding their own. This is a change to the previous regulation. It defined the grey market (of unregistered *Tagesmütter*) out of existence. This is in sharp contrast to the English policy context. The need to protect children in family day care has led to more and more stringent regulation of registration and control (Jackson and Jackson 1979; Bell 1990). However, when public money is used to refund a family day care provider, the *Jugendamt* has to be satisfied that the *Tagesmutter* is suitable (paragraphs 23 and 44). The definition of money received by *Tagesmütter* as reimbursement in contrast to pay is connected to the history of this from of childcare provision. As developed from foster care, the money paid by social services was intended as compensation for costs incurred but not as a source of any significant income. The *KJHG* sets out that a refund may be available when childcare arrangements further the development of the individual child. *Land* laws have the power to specify the content and extent of the functions and benefits further, for example, the circumstances of the child that warrant eligibility for subsidy and the amount of refund paid. The *Länder* also have the power to determine who finances the refund payable to family day care providers. It may be a combination of monies from the federal *Jugendamt*, the *Landesjugendamt*, the local authority and local child and youth services agencies. The interpretation and implementation practices vary considerably between the 16 *Länder* (Walter-Smets 1996).

The money German *Tagesmütter* receive out of public funds is exempt from taxation when the arrangements are intended to be long-term and when the refunds received do not constitute the main source of income. The legislation assumes that the refund for the care for less than five children cannot constitute the main source of living (Lakies 1996). An English equivalent of a differentiation of public money received for care does not exist - childminders' income earned for looking after children in need, paid for by social services, is treated like any other income from self-employment. In contrast it is only the money received from parents by German *Tagesmütter* that is subject to taxation. Money from private sources, exceeding the allowance for expenses of £171.43 (DM480) per child per month has to be taxed.

Paragraph 23 *KJHG* prescribes co-operation between parents and a family day care provider. Both, parents and the family day care provider have the right to be advised by the *Jugendamt*. In addition, the *Jugendamt* is obliged to support family day care provider associations.

Comparison

The similarities in the developments of the legal framework of family day care provision in England and Germany are striking. Both countries introduced a new legal framework for children at approximately the same time. Legislators in both countries aimed to gather legislation concerning children into one framework. In both countries a drive towards emphasising the supporting role of the state and its bodies as well as parents' responsibility (in contrast to rights) was present. Yet the difference in the portrayal of children, providers and parents in relation to family day care are extraordinary. The British Children Act 1989 focuses on the need for physical protection of children. In order to protect children childminders have to be police and health checked, and they, and their premises, have to be regularly inspected. Local authorities have the duty to ensure minimum standards. Apparently parents are not able to evaluate the quality of care offered or how safe children are in the care of a particular childminder. The German KJHG removed the duty to register up to a certain number of children. Parents are seen to be able to choose the right person and environment for the care of their children outside the home. The Act stresses children's needs, and children's rights to receive support to promoting development and well-being. Physical danger as especially lurking at family day care providers is not an issue for the legislator formulating the paragraphs regulating family day care. Protection of children is dealt with in a different place in the Act.

[1] From September 2001 criminal record checks will have to go through the newly established Criminal Records Bureau. The applicant (the childminder) will have to pay a fee of £12 (only volunteers are exempt). The National Childminding Association fears a further decline in numbers of childminders, and a growth of the unregulated sector. The former would be the outcome of the need to apply for a new criminal record check when the inspections become the responsibility of OfSTED – losing established childminders, and deterring new childminders through cost (National Childminding Association 2001a).

[2] A Department of Health Local Authority Circular (LAC) recommended a more stringent establishment of an applicant's identity and fitness to care for children. This may include medical records and a shorter period between the initial inspection and the first 'annual' inspection. Since fees are charged to the childminder a tension arises from the financial interests of the childminder and the safety interests of the local authority (Department of Health 1999). This LAC may be understood in the light of the conviction of two childminders - one for manslaughter (Wainwright 1997), the other for murder (Hall 1998a; b). In both cases the Local Authority was found wanting in ensuring the fitness of the person. A previous LAC emphasised that too stringent an application of Guidance and Regulations, or the establishment of even higher standards may be counterproductive to the aim of expanding day care facilities of an acceptable standard. It continues to emphasise that local authorities should operate their registration systems in a constructive and flexible way (Department of Health 1993).

[3] The provision of family day care for children in need as part of possible foster care provision continues to exist. It is regulated in paragraph 35 a KJHG and financed out of a different budget.

Appendix 4: Operating costs of day care for children in Rostock 1998

	DM/month	£* / month	£* / week	Maximum of parents' contribution: £* / week
Family day care				
Pre-school, full-time up to 10 hours / day	732	261.43	65.36	19.55
Pre-school, part-time up to 6 hours / day	439	156.79	39.20	11.69
Schoolchild, full-time up to 6 hours / day	439	156.79	39.20	11.69
Schoolchild, part-time up to 3 hours / day	263	93.93	23.48	7.05
Day centre				
Krippe up to third birthday				
Full-time	1100	392.86	98.21	29.46
Part-time	600	214.29	53.57	17.68
Kindergarten				
Full-time	600	214.29	53.57	16.07
Part-time	360	128.57	32.14	9.46
Hort school children				
Full-time up to 6 hours / day	338	120.71	30.18	9.01
Part-time up to 3 hours / day	203	82.14	20.54	5.45

* The conversion of DM into Pound Sterling is based on an exchange rate of 1 DM = £2.80

Source: (Innenministerium des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 1997 , own calculation)

Appendix 5: Questionnaire England

Survey of Childminders in the north-east of England

This survey is carried out by a PhD student in the Department of Social Policy at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the work as a childminder. All information is

It would be very helpful if you could take the time to answer all the questions. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any question just leave the answer blank. Please return your questionnaire by posting in the enclosed freepost envelop. If you have any problems or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Ulrike Gelder
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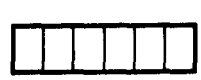
Department of Social Policy
Claremont Bridge Building
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU

Phone (0191) 222 5610
E-mail: I.U.Gelder@ncl.ac.uk



About yourself

1. When did you register the first time as a childminder? .....

2. How long in all have you been working as a registered childminder?

(Please specify).....

3. For how many children are you registered? ..... under one

..... under five

..... under eight

4. Do you work(Please ✓ where appropriate)

Alone ..... ☐

In partnership with another childminder ☐

With an assistant ..... ☐

5. Do you have other jobs?

no ☐ yes ☐

(Please specify).....

6. Do you have children?

no ☐ yes ☐

How many boys? ..... How old are they? .....

How many girls? ..... How old are they? .....

Before you became a childminder

7. Before you applied for registration as a childminder were you .....
(Please ✓ where appropriate)

In education / training ☐ Looking for work ☐

Unemployed ☐ Looking after the home ☐

Caring for young children ☐

Employed ☐ If employed - what was your last job?

.....

Self-employed ☐ If self-employed - please specify.....

Other (Please specify) .....

8. Have you in the past, or do you now use childcare for your own children?
(Please ✓ as many as apply)

	In the past	At present	Weekly costs
Relatives	☐	☐	£.....
Friends / neighbours	☐	☐	£.....
Childminder	☐	☐	£.....
Nanny	☐	☐	£.....
Au-pair	☐	☐	£.....
Day-centre	☐	☐	£.....
Play-groups	☐	☐	£.....
Nursery	☐	☐	£.....
Out-of-school scheme	☐	☐	£.....
Other			£.....

(Please specify)

Not in the past ☐ Not at present ☐

9. Before you applied for registration as a childminder did you know other childminders?

yes ☐ no ☐

If no: Where did you hear about childminding the first time?

.....
.....
.....

Becoming a childminder

10. Please note down in a few words your reasons for starting as a childminder.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

11. How long did you have to wait for your registration certificate after application?

.....

12. When was your last inspection by Social Services?

.....

13. Were you informed by Social Services when the inspection would take place?

no ☐ yes ☐

If yes, how long before hand? .....

14. Did you attend any of the following sessions or courses?
(Please ✓ and if yes, specify length and who offered courses)

Information session before application no ☐ yes
.....
.....

Pre-registration course no ☐ yes
.....
.....

Post-registration course no ☐ yes
.....
.....

First Aid course no ☐ yes
.....
.....

Other no ☐ yes
.....
.....

15. Which parts of your house / flat do you use for childminding?
(Please ✓ as many as apply)

Living room	☐	Back yard	☐
Dining room	☐	Bed room	☐
Kitchen	☐	Garden	☐
Room set aside for childminding	☐	Other (Please specify)	

.....
.....
.....

16. What alterations to your house / flat were necessary?
(Please ✓ as many as apply)

Stair gate	☐	Locks on doors	☐
Fireguard	☐	Locks on cupboards	☐
Smoke alarm	☐	Foil on glass	☐
Medical cupboard	☐	Removal of plants	☐
Removal of carpets	☐	Removal of pet	☐

Other (Please specify) .....
.....
.....

17. Do you have insurance through (Please ✓ where appropriate)

Social Services ☐

National Childminding Association ☐

None ☐

Other (Please specify).....

Working as a childminder

18. How do parents find you?
(Please ✓ as many as apply)

I am on the Social Services list ☐

I am on the list of a childminder group ☐

I wait until I am approached by friends, neighbours or relatives ☐

I wait until Social Services approach for sponsored childminding for children in need ☐

I put the word around in mother-and -toddler groups, that I have free places ☐

I advertise in local shops ☐

I put an advert into the local newspaper ☐

I approach expecting mothers or mothers of young children ☐

I am on the list of a childcare agency that brings parents and childminders together ☐

Other (Please specify

.....
.....

19. What do you do before you take on a new child? Please ✓ one box on the scale (always, most of the times, , sometimes, never) for each statement.

	always	mostly	sometimes	never
I ask as many questions as possible by telephone first	☐	☐	☐	☐
I give as much information about myself and my family as possible on the phone first	☐	☐	☐	☐
I meet both parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
My husband/partner meets the parents of the child	☐	☐	☐	☐
My husband/partner meets the child	☐	☐	☐	☐
My own child/children have met the parents of the child	☐	☐	☐	☐
My child/children meet the child	☐	☐	☐	☐
The new parents meet the other child/children I look after	☐	☐	☐	☐
The new child meets the other child/children I look after	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consult the parents of other children I look after	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consult Social Services	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Do you have a contract with parents?

no ☐ yes ☐

21. If you have a contract, what is covered in it? Please ✓ as many as apply.

Times when childminding occurs	☐	Arrangements for provision of meals	☐
Arrangements for activities like play-groups	☐	Agreement on what parents have to provide	☐
Agreement regarding the action to be taken if the child becomes ill	☐	A no-smacking agreement	☐
Payment for regular service	☐	Payment for overtime	☐
Childminder's annual holiday	☐	Payment during childminder's annual holiday	☐
Parent's annual holiday	☐	Payment during parent's annual holiday	☐
Charges for absence due to child's / parent's sickness	☐	Charges for absence due to bank holidays	☐
Charges for absence due to occasional days off	☐	Day on which payment will be made	☐
Period of notice required	☐	Date of review of agreement	☐
Agreement regarding the use of out-door toys	☐	Other	

22. How much do you charge? Fill in only those which apply.

Hourly £.....

In this rate are included (Please ✓ where appropriate)

Breakfast ☐	Soft-play / similar activities ☐
Dinner ☐	Outings ☐
Tea ☐	Nappies ☐
Snacks ☐	Cremes / lotions ☐
Mother-and toddler group ☐	Overtime ☐
	Toys ☐

Daily £.....

In this rate are included (Please ✓ where appropriate)

Breakfast ☐	Soft-play / similar activities ☐
Dinner ☐	Outings ☐
Tea ☐	Nappies ☐
Snacks ☐	Cremes / lotions ☐
Mother-and toddler group ☐	Overtime ☐
	Toys ☐

Weekly £.....	
In this rate are included (Please ✓ where appropriate)	
Breakfast ☐ Dinner ☐ Tea ☐ Snacks ☐ Mother-and toddler group ☐	Soft-play / similar activities ☐ Outings ☐ Nappies ☐ Cremes / lotions ☐ Overtime ☐ Toys ☐

23. Do you ask for a retainer during parents' holidays?

no ☐ yes ☐

If yes (Please specify how much) .....

24. Do you offer a reduction to the second child of the same family?

no ☐ yes ☐

If yes (Please specify how much).....

25. Please list the children you mind and ✓ where appropriate.

Age	**Hours per week**	**boy**	**girl**	**sponsored**	**special needs**
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐

26.Your last working week: Please draw a line for each child in your care from the time they arrived to the time they left, as shown in the example.

example	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child					play-group											
3. child																

Monday	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Tuesday	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Wed.day	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Thursday	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Friday	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Sat.day	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Sunday	6 am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 pm
1. child																
2. child																
3. child																

Please read the following statements and rate, on the scale from agree strongly to disagree strongly by ticking one of the provided boxes.

	agree strongly		don't know		disagree strongly
27. I love to watch children develop.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. I like to be my own boss.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. I want to be there for my own children in the case they need me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I enjoy negotiating contracts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. I love babies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. My spouse / partner prefers me to stay at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I need to earn money.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. I like to befriend the parents of the children I look after.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. Childminding is a stop-gap for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. As a childminder I enjoy meeting other like-minded women.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. The income for childminders is about right.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. I like to have a professional relationship with parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. I enjoy the company of children.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. I offer valuable advise and support to parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. Sometimes I feel as if I look after the parents, too.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. I am a childcare professional.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. The reward for childminding is love.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. Childminding is a way to extend your family.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. The paperwork for the Inland Revenue and Social Services is easy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. It is important to have a written contract.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

47. Do you have access to a toy library?

no ☐ yes ☐

Do you use it?

no ☐ yes ☐

48. Do you have the possibility to borrow equipment like safety gates, fire blankets and prams from social services?

no ☐ yes ☐

What did you borrow during the last year? .....

.....

.....

.....

49. Please ✓ the items you have bought for use by the children in your care during the last year

Safety-gate	☐	Out-door toys	☐
Fire guard	☐	Bottle steriliser	☐
Fire blanket	☐	Baby monitor	☐
First Aid Kit	☐	Play pen	☐
Smoke alarm	☐	In-door toys	☐
Car seat	☐	Books	☐
Baby seat	☐	Arts / crafts materials	☐
Push chair / pram	☐	Musical instruments	☐
High chair	☐	Audio tapes	☐
Baby walker	☐	Video tapes	☐

Other (Please specify) .....

.....

.....

50. Do you know what your expenses were during your last working week?

Food and drink	£.....
Heat and light	£.....
Outings etc.	£.....
Toys and equipment	
	£ .....
Wear and tear	£.....
Miscellaneous	£.....
Total	£.....

51. How much time do you spend on book keeping? ..... hours per month

52. Do you get help with book keeping?

no ☐ yes ☐

If yes (Please ✓ as many as apply)

Spouse / partner ☐

Your parents ☐

Sister/brother ☐

Your child / children ☐

Friend ☐

Social services ☐

Other (Please specify).....

53. When did you last speak to someone from Social Services, e.g. your Under Eights' Officer?

.....

54. What were the main issues of this conversation?
(Please ✓ as many as apply)

Safety issues inside the house	☐	Equal opportunities	☐
Safety issues outside the house	☐	Business matters	☐
First Aid / health	☐	Insurance matters	☐
Nutrition / food hygiene	☐	Dealing with parents	☐
Child development	☐	Contracts with parents	☐
Special needs	☐	Co-operation between childminders	☐
Other (please specify)		Your own family	☐

.....

.....

.....

.....

55. If applicable, does your spouse / partner support your work as a childminder in any of the following ways? (Please ✓ as many as apply)

Plays with children in your care	☐	Does more housework	☐
Feeds children	☐	Goes shopping more often	☐
Comfort children	☐	Cooks more often	☐
Helps to take children out	☐	Looks after own children more often	☐
Talks to parents	☐	Keeps the books	☐

Other (Please specify)

.....

56. If your own child or children are 11 years or older, do they support your work in any of the following ways? (Please ✓ as many as apply)

Play with children in your care	☐	Do more housework	☐
Watch TV with children in your care	☐	Go shopping more often	☐
Feed children	☐	Cook more often	☐
Comfort children	☐	Help you to take children out	☐
		Keep the books	☐

Other (Please specify)

.....

57. Are you a member of the National Childminding Association (NCMA) ?

no ☐ yes ☐

When did you join? .....

If yes, do you attend meetings? yes ☐ no ☐

Do you attend the AGM? yes ☐ no ☐

58. Are you a member of a trade union?

no ☐ yes ☐

If yes, Please specify .....

Finally, for statistical purposes, some questions about yourself

59 Are you ..... male ☐ female ☐

60. How old are you? .....

61. What is your ethnic origin? (please ✓ where appropriate)

Black-African	☐	Indian	☐
Black-Caribbean	☐	Other Asian	☐
Black-Other (please specify)		Pakistani	☐
.....			
Bangladeshi	☐	White	☐
Chinese	☐	Other (please specify)	
		.....	

62. Do you live with

Spouse / Partner ☐

Children ☐

Mother ☐

Father ☐

Other

(Please specify).....

63. (If applicable)Is your spouse / partner

Employed ☐
Self-employed ☐
Unemployed ☐
In Education / training ☐
Other
(Please specify).....

64. If in employment, how many hours per week does your spouse / partner work?

.....

65.(If applicable)Is your child / are your children

Employed ☐
Self-employed ☐
Unemployed ☐
In Education / Training ☐
Other (Please specify)

.....

66. Do you own/rent the property where you live?

Rented ☐ Owned ☐ Other .....

67. How much do you spend on housing per week (rent or mortgage) in £
(Please ✓ where appropriate)

0 - 30	☐	101 - 150	☐
31 - 50	☐	151 - 200	☐
51 - 100	☐	201 and more	☐

68. What is your household income per week in £ (after tax, with child benefit)?

below 50	☐	251 - 300	☐
51 - 100	☐	301 - 400	☐
101 - 150	☐	401 - 500	☐
151 - 200	☐	500 - 600	☐
201 - 250	☐	600 and more	☐

69. Does anyone living in your household receive any of the following benefits? (Please ✓)

Income Support ☐

Family Credit ☐

Disability Working Allowance ☐

70. Do you have any childcare related training or qualification?

yes ☐ no ☐

If yes, please specify

.....

.....

.....

71. What qualifications do you have?

O Levels/GCSE ☐

A Levels / BTEC's ☐

Professional training (e.g. nursing, teaching) ☐

Honours Degree or above ☐

None ☐

other (Please specify)

.....

.....

72. Approaching the millennium, how do you see the future of your work as a childminder?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I will be seeking a small number of childminders to conduct interviews. Please ✓ if you like to be considered for an interview ☐ and note down your phone number

.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. All answers will be treated confidential.

Please recall your last working day and note down all household and childminding activities and commitments, for example when children arrived, school runs, meals, mother-and-toddler groups, hanging the washing out, tidying, talking to parents etc.

6 am	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
1 pm	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9 pm	

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this sheet. Please enclose in the stamped and addressed envelop or send to **Ulrike Gelder, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Department of Social Policy, Claremont Bridge Building, NE1 7RU.**

Appendix 6: Questionnaire Germany

Umfrage
Tagesmütter in Rostock

Diese Fragebogenerhebung wird von einer Doktorandin der Universität Newcastle upon Tyne in Großbritannien durchgeführt. Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit sollen zu einem besseren Verständnis der Arbeit deutscher und englischer Tagesmütter dienen. Alle Informationen werden

streng vertraulich

behandelt.

Es wäre sehr hilfreich, wenn Sie sich die Zeit nehmen würden alle Fragen zu beantworten. Falls Ihnen jedoch bestimmte Fragen unangenehm sind, lassen sie einfach die Antwort aus. Bitte schicken Sie mir den ausgefüllten Fragebogen in dem beigefügten, frankierten Briefumschlag. Wenn Sie Schwierigkeiten mit dem Fragebogen oder den Anmerkungen und Fragen haben, zögern Sie bitte nicht, sich an mich zu wenden. Sie können mich unter folgender Adresse erreichen:

Ulrike Gelder
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(Bitte Zutreffendes ankreuzen, bzw. ausfüllen)

1. Seit wann arbeiten Sie als Tagesmutter? .....

2. Haben Sie die Pflegeerlaubnis des Rostocker Jugendamtes?

nein ja

Falls ja: seit .....(Datum)

3. Arbeiten Sie

alleine oder

zusammen mit einer anderen Tagesmutter?

4. Arbeiten Sie

bei Ihnen zu Hause oder

im Haushalt der zu betreuenden Kinder?

.....

5. Haben Sie noch eine andere Arbeit?

nein ja, als .....

6. Haben Sie eigene Kinder?

nein ja

Davon ..... Jungen, ... Jahre alt

Davon ..... Mädchen, ... Jahre alt

7. Bevor Sie Tagesmutter wurden, waren Sie

In der Ausbildung als ..... Arbeitslos

Angestellt als ..... Hausfrau?

Selbständig in .....

8. Welchen Kinderbetreuungsmöglichkeiten haben Sie in der Vergangenheit für Ihre eigenen Kinder genutzt, oder nutzen Sie momentan?

	Vergangenheit	zur Zeit	Kosten per Monat
Verwandte			..... DM
Freunde/Nachbarn			..... DM
Tagesmutter/Kinderfrau			..... DM
Au-Pair			..... DM
Krippe			..... DM
Kindertagesstätte			..... DM
Hort			..... DM
Spielgruppe			..... DM
Sonstiges			..... DM
Keine			..... DM

9. Kannten Sie andere Tagesmütter bevor Sie selbst eine wurden?

nein ja

falls nicht: Wo haben Sie zum ersten Mal etwas über Tagesmütter erfahren?

.....
.....
.....

10. Bitte schildern Sie in ein paar Worten Ihre Gründe, Tagesmutter zu werden.

.....
.....
.....

11. Falls zutreffend: Wieviel Zeit verging zwischen Ihrem ersten Kontakt zum Jugendamt und der Erteilung der Pflegeerlaubnis? .....

12. Haben Sie an Kursen oder Fortbildungsveranstaltungen, die sich auf die Arbeit mit Kindern beziehen, teilgenommen?

nein ja

Falls ja, welche?

	Kurstitel	Dauer	von - bis
a)	.....	.....	.....
b)	.....	.....	.....
c)	.....	.....	.....
d)	.....	.....	.....

13. Haben Sie Ihre Wohnung /Ihr Haus für die Arbeit als Tagesmutter verändert (z.B. ein Kinderzimmer für die Tageskinder eingerichtet)?

nein ja

Falls ja, schildern Sie bitte die Veränderungen

.....
.....
.....

14. Sind Sie für Ihre Arbeit als Tagesmutter versichert?

nein ja, bei: .....

Falls ja, wer bezahlt die Versicherungsbeiträge?

Sie selbst die Eltern Ihrer Tageskinder jemand anderes, und zwar:

.....

15. Haben Sie eine Haftpflichtversicherung, die Ihre Arbeit als Tagesmutter umfaßt?

nein ja, bei: .....

15. Haben Sie Vorsorge für Ihren Altersruhestand getroffen?

nein ja: .....

Ihre Arbeit als Tagesmutter

16. Wie bekommen Sie Arbeit als Tagesmutter?

Vermittlung durch das Jugendamt

Vermittlung durch andere Tagesmütter

Ich warte, bis sich Eltern an mich wenden

Ich erzähle Freunden und Bekannten, daß ich einen Platz frei habe

Ich mache Aushänge in Läden, im Postamt und dergleichen in meiner Wohngegend

Ich spreche Schwangere und Mütter kleiner Kinder an

Ich bin auf der Liste einer Vermittlungsagentur.

Sonstiges .....

17. Haben Sie einen schriftlichen Vertrag mit den Eltern?

nein ja

18. Wer finanziert die Betreuung Ihrer Tageskinder?

Das Jugendamt und die Eltern

Ausschließlich die Eltern: Ganztagsbetreuung ..... DM pro Monat

Teilzeitbetreuung ..... DM pro Monat

19. Welche Zusätzlichen Kosten entstehen den Eltern?

Essengeld: ..... DM pro Tag

Überstunden: ..... DM pro Überstunde

Übernachtung: ..... DM

Wochenende: ..... DM

Sonstiges: .... DM

20. Wieviel Urlaub steht Ihnen laut Vertrag im Jahr zu? ..... Tage im Jahr

21. Wieviel Urlaub haben Sie im letzten Kalenderjahr wahrgenommen? ..... Tage

22. Bitte listen Sie die Kinder auf, die Sie zur Zeit betreuen:

	Alter	Stunden pro Woche	Junge/Mädchen	seit
a)	.....	.....	.....	.....
b)	.....	.....	.....	.....
c)	.....	.....	.....	.....
d)	.....	.....	.....	.....

23. Führen Sie Buch über Ihre Einnahmen und Ausgaben?

nein ja

24. Wann haben Sie das letzte Mal mit jemandem vom Jugendamt gesprochen? .....

25. Um was ging es in diesem Gespräch?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

26. Falls Sie mit Ihrem Gatten/Partner zusammen leben, werden Sie in Ihrer Arbeit als Tagesmutter auf eine der folgenden Weisen unterstützt?

Mit Tageskindern spielen	Leistet mehr Hausarbeit
Tageskinder füttern	Geht öfter einkaufen
Tageskinder trösten	Kocht öfters
Hilfe bei Spaziergängen/Ausflügen	Betreut eigene Kinder öfter
Elterngespräche	Hilft bei der Buchführung und Formularen
Sonstiges	

27. Falls Kinder in Ihrem Haushalt leben, werden Sie in Ihrer Arbeit als Tagesmutter auf eine der folgenden Weisen unterstützt?

Mit Tageskindern spielen	Leistet mehr Hausarbeit
Gemeinsam fernsehen	Geht öfter einkaufen
Tageskinder füttern	Kocht öfters
Tageskinder trösten	Hilft bei der Buchführung und Formularen
Hilfe bei Spaziergängen/Ausflügen	
Sonstiges	

28. Sind Sie Mitglied im Tagesmütterverein e.V.

nein ja

falls ja, seit wann? .....

Nehmen Sie an Zusammenkünften teil?

nein ja

Zum Schluß noch einige Fragen zu Ihnen und Ihrem Haushalt für statistische Zwecke

29. Geschlecht: männlich weiblich

30. Alter: ..... Jahre

31. Nationalität: .....

32. Leben Sie in einem Haushalt mit

- Ihrem Gatten/Partner
- Ihrem Kind/Ihren Kindern
- Mutter
- Vater
- Sonstigen .....

33. Falls zutreffend ist Ihr Gatte/Partner

- angestellt
- arbeitslos
- selbständig
- in der Schule, Ausbildung oder Umschulung
- Sonstiges .....

34. Wie viele Stunden pro Woche arbeitet Ihr Gatte/Partner? ..... Stunden pro Woche

35. Falls zutreffend ist Ihr Kind, sind Ihre Kinder

- angestellt
- arbeitslos
- selbständig
- in der Schule, Ausbildung oder Umschulung
- Sonstiges .....

36. Falls zutreffend: Wie viele Stunden pro Woche arbeitet Ihr Kind/Ihre Kinder?

..... Stunden pro Woche.

37. Wieviel müssen Sie im Monat für Miete oder Hypothekenabzahlungen, einschließlich Nebenkosten aufbringen?

ca. ..... DM

38. Das Gesamtbruttoeinkommen Ihres Haushalts beträgt:

- unter 1000 DM
- 1000 - 1250 DM
- 1251 - 1500 DM
- 1501 - 1750 DM
- 2001 - 2500 DM
- 2501 - 3000 DM
- 3001 - 3500 DM
- 3501 - 4000 DM
- 4000 DM und darüber

39. Diese Bruttoeinkommen setzt sich zusammen aus:

Lohn
Sozialhilfe
Arbeitslosengeld/Arbeitslosenhilfe
Rente
Wohngeld
Stipendien
Einnahmen aus Vermietung/Verpachtung
weitere Einkünfte:
.....
.....

40. Welche schulischen oder beruflichen Abschlüsse haben Sie?

Hauptschule
Mittlere Reife
zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule
Fachhochschulereife
zweijährige bzw. dreijährige erweiterte Oberschule
Abitur
Fachschule für
.....
Berufsausbildung mit Fachabitur
Fachhochschule für
.....
Hochschulausbildung
.....
Ausbildung/Lehre als
.....
andere: .....
keine

41. Wie sehen Sie die Zukunft ihrer Tagesmuttertätigkeit nach der Jahrhundertwende?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

42. Ich würde gerne noch einige Tagesmütter in nächster Zukunft interviewen. Bitte lassen Sie mich wissen, ob Sie Zeit und Lust haben.

nein, ich habe keine Lust

ja, Sie können mich unter folgender Telefonnummer erreichen, um weiteres zu besprechen und einen Termin auszumachen:

.....

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Zeit und Mühe. Alle Antworten werden vertraulich behandelt.

Falls Sie noch etwas Zeit, Energie und Lust haben, bitte ich Sie Ihren letzten Arbeitstag in Erinnerung zu rufen. Schreiben Sie alle Haushalts- und Kinderbetreuungstätigkeiten auf, z.B. wann die Kinder gekommen sind, den Besuch eines Spielplatzes, Hausaufgaben, Kochen, Einkaufen, Aufräumen, Elterngespräche und so weiter.

6 Uhr	
7 Uhr	
8 Uhr	
9 Uhr	
10 Uhr	
11 Uhr	
12 Uhr	
13 Uhr	
14 Uhr	
15 Uhr	
16 Uhr	
17 Uhr	
18 Uhr	
19 Uhr	
20 Uhr	
21 Uhr	

Noch einmal: vielen herzlichen Dank für Ihre Unterstützung!

Appendix 7: Interview Schedule England

Interview Schedule/Memory Aid: Childminders

Thank you very much for giving up your time and allowing me to visit your house. As you know from the questionnaire I try to gather in formation about the working situation of childminders... Confidential

You don't have to answer....

Becoming a childminder

I'd like to take you back in time. Would you like to tell me the story of how you became a childminder? *Perhaps probing along reasons given in the questionnaire.* Did you consider taking on some other work?

How much was your husband/partner involved in this decision?

Did you talk to your children about your plans before you applied for registration? Did they like the idea?

Stability of work arrangements

Since you filled out the questionnaire in March this year have there been any changes concerning the children on your books or the hours you look after them?

Is this stability/instability usual?

Would you like to take on more / less children?

Probe: e.g.: Why don't you? Have you ever turned parents down? Why?

How much flexibility in being available do parents expect from you?

Other childminders

You spent some time in mother and toddler groups, or childminder groups. Why do you go? How many times a week do you attend such a group? Do you enjoy attending this sessions? What is the best aspect of it? *(Trying to find answers to what their main motivation is, like having a rest from sole responsibility for children, meeting other adults, or offering children some group experience)*

Do you know other childminders working in this area? Do you meet them? How often?

In what way do you support each other?

Depending on length worked: Do you receive advice by a childminder who is longer in the business as you? or: Do you advise or give tips to new childminders on this kind of work? *Probe into topics of advice, i.e. limits.*

Have you ever looked after another childminder's children, I mean the ones she is paid for to look after?

You may have heard that the government proposes to support approved childminder networks in order to ensure a good coverage of early years provision. Have you heard about this? (If yes, probe, where, when and how.)

Could you imagine working closer together with other childminders. Would you be interested? (I have to find out more about this proposals)

Could you imagine working close together with another childminder on the same premises? Whose house would it be?

If member of the NCMA: Why do you belong to the NCMA? What benefits has your membership of the NCMA?

Children - minded, and your own

In what ways is it good and in what ways is bad for your children that you childmind?

Do you think there are differences between how you treat your own children and the children you mind?

Your own children are about the same age / younger *I* older than the children you look after. How do you balance the different needs of your own children and the children you look after?

Referring to the questionnaire, what they ticked concerning the help of their children, or that my assumption about the age of 11 was a bit arbitrary.

How much can you rely on the support by your children? Do you think your children appreciate your work?

Husband

Referring to questionnaire:

From the questionnaire I understood he's got a full-time job (if that is what the childminder had stated in the questionnaire), what does he work?

Is he involved at all in your work?

How often does your husband see the children you look after?

You ticked that he is talking to the parents of the children you look after. What do they talk about?

What do you think how does your husband feel about having the family home turned into your working place?

Do you feel your husband appreciates your work as a childminder?

Parents

The literature about childminding describes tensions between parents and childminders. What tensions do you feel? There seem to be two main areas where conflicts emerge: One is how children are brought up, the other one is payment and hours. What are your experiences?

How do you deal with ..(*what she told me*), or How do you cope, what do you do then etc. Do you think there are ways to avoid this?

What have you found is the best way to develop a professional relationship with parents? (*check questionnaire .if they do not wish to have a professional relationship, ask why*)

How important is it to befriend the parents of the children you look after? (*check questionnaire .maybe they do not want to befriend parents .then change question.)*

Do you feel parents appreciate your work?

Do you know what the parents work?

Income

You provided me with in formation about how much you charge and what is included in the hourly/daily/weekly charge. However, there are some areas I still do not grasp entirely.

Do you charge only full hours? What happens, for example, if a parent is 10 minutes late? Is it possible to book half an hour?

Do you think the basic rate you charge is usual for *(the area the childminder lives)*. Do you talk about how much to charge with other childminders? *Probe into if there are attempts to fix a local rate.*

Is there competition between childminders?

How much do you charge for *(see questionnaire what is not included in the basic rate)*. Do you think that is usual for this area?

Do parents ever disagree with you about charges, extras, overtime. How do you deal with this

Is the money you earn from childminding ear-marked for particular spending in the household?

What do you spend it on?

Business

As a childminder, do you see yourself as running a (small) business? Do you like this aspect of childminding?

What else is involved in the running of your business as a childminder?

Prompt: Some childminders mentioned in their questionnaires that the paperwork has increased and they expect it to increase even further.

Do you feel well prepared to be your own business woman?

Career

Do you think childminding is a profession?

What do you think are the most important skills a childminder should have?

Do you think it is possible to teach *I* learn *this skill?* How?

Are there particular personal experiences that have shaped your work as a childminder?

Can you think of any courses that could improve your work as a childminder?

Would you like them provided and would you pay for it?

When you left school, did you have a career in mind? *Maybe probe, e.g.:* What happened?: Has working as a childminder changed your plans about what you want to do when your children don't need you so much any more?

You ticked in the questionnaire that childminding is/is not a stopgap for you. *For long-standing childminders:* When you started to work as a childminder, did you consider it then to be a stop-gap? O*r for childminders not working so long:* Now that you have worked _ years as a childminder can you imagine to remain a childminder although your children do not need you so much any more?

Check also the millennium question, and probe, e.g.: You wrote that you believe there always will be work for childminders. Do you mean you would like to remain a childminder for years to come? *Or:* You wrote that there are more nurseries and out of school clubs, leading to a decline in demand for childminders. What are your personal experiences with that? What will you do?

Social Services

The last time you spoke to someone from social services was ... Has there been any contact since? Have you had in the mean time your annual inspection since the questionnaire *(if it is due according to the questionnaire)?*

The Under Eight's officer or the inspecting officer has the duty to declare childminders as fit persons and the premises as suitable. What do you think is more important?

Are the inspections helpful to your work?

Did you ever contacted social services or your Under Eights' Officer when you had problems with a child or with parents? *(If no ask who helped / advised instead).*

Do you feel you can get help from your Under Eights' Officer if you have problems with the business side of childminding?

Is there anything you think could improve the registration of childminders and the regulation of childminding? *(Here some of headline stories may turn up. / may be able to find out what they think about the vulnerability of childminders, or children, or parents It may turn out to be similar to the discussion teachers lead, referring to their vulnerability of being accused of sexual abuse. I have to think about, if and how far I want to get into this issue.)*

Finally some 'big' questions

What are the best and what are the worst aspects of your work as a childminder?

Would you use the service of a childminder for your own children? *Check questionnaire, they have in the past.*

Would you like your own child/ren become a childminder?

Thank you very much ..... something you like to add

Appendix 8: Interview Schedule Germany

Interviewplan

Herzlichen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit für mich nehmen und ich Sie besuchen darf. Wie Sie wissen interessiere ich mich für die Arbeitssituation deutscher Tagesmütter. AIIes was Sie mir sagen wird streng vertraulich behandelt....

Über Sie

Vom Fragebogen her weil3 ioh, dass sie hier mit lhrem Mann /

Partner und Ihrem Kind / Kindern Ieben. Sie sind Jahre alt. Ihre

Kinder sind.

Ausserdem haben Sie mich wissen Iassen, dass Ihr Mann

Stunden arbeitet.

AIs was arbeitet Ihr Mann?

Tagesmutter werden

Lassen Sie uns in die Vergangenheit gehen. Erzählen Sie mir nochmal, wie es war als Sie Tagesmutter wurden, wie es dazu kam und wie es von statten ging.

Hatten Sie sich damals übelegt eine andere Arbeit anzunehmen?

Inwieweit war Ihr Partner an dieser Entscheidung beteiligt? Haben Sie mit Ihren Kindern über Ihre Pläne gesproohen? Welche Bedingungen mussten Sie erfüllen, um als Tagesmutter anerkannt zu werden?

Derzeitige Arbeitsbedingungen

Seit dem Sie den Fragebogen ausgefüllt haben, hat es da Veränderungen bezüglich der Tageskinder gegeben? Könnnen Sie voraussehen, wie lange die Situation so bleibt?

Wieviele Kinder würden Sie am liebsten betreuen?

Wie kommen Sie zu den Kindern, die Sie betreuen?

Haben Sie schon einmal Eltern eine Absage erteilt? Was waren die Gründe?

In welchem Ausmar3 erwarten Eltern Flexiblität von lhnen?

Gibt es Orte an denen sich Mütter oder Tagesmütter mit Kindern

treffen? Gehen Sie da hin? Wie oft?

Was gefallt lhnen persönlich am besten an diesen Treffen?

Was sind die negativen Seiten?

Kennen Sie andere Tagesmütter hier in der Umgebung? Unterstützen sie sich gegenseitig?

Beraten Sie Tagesmütter, die diese Tätigkeit gerade aufgenommen haben, bzw. erhalten Sie Rat von alteingesessenen Tagesmüttern?

Haben Sie jemals die Tageskinder einer anderen Tagesmutter betreut?

Könnten Sie sich vorstellen noch enger mit einer anderen Tagesmutter zusammen zu arbeiten?

Wie würde das Ihrer Vorstellung nach aussehen?

Sie sind / sind nicht Mitglied im Tagesmütter Verein. Warum?

Was sind die Vorteile der Mitgliederschaft?

Gibt es auch Nachteile?

Alltag

Sie haben mir recht ausführli.ch einen Ihrer Arbeitstage geschildert.

War das em typischer Arbeitstag?

Hat sich eine Routine entwickelt? Wie ist die entstanden?

Kinder

Welche Vorteile und welche Nachteile entstehen für Ihre Kinder daraus, dass Sie als Tagesmutter arbeiten?

Glauben Sie, dass Sie Ihre eigenen und Ihre Tageskinder unterschiedlich behandeln?

Wie kriegen Sie die unterschiedlichen Bedürfnisse aller Kinder unter einen Hut?

Erhalten Sie Hilfe bei Ihrer Arbeit von Ihren Kinder?

Glauben Sie, dass Ihre Kinder Ihre Arbeit schätzen?

Partner

Laut dem Fragebogen ist Ihr Mann / Partner in gewissem Maße nicht in die Arbeit mit einbezogen. Wie hat sich das entwickelt?

Wie oft treffen Ihr Partner und Ihre Tageskinder zusammen? Hat Ihr Partner Kontakt zu den Eltern der Kinder, die Sie betreuen?

Was glauben Sie hält Ihr Partner davon, dass Sie das gemeinsame Heim in Ihre Arbeitsstätte verwandeln?

Sie haben angekreuzt, dass Ihr Mann sich öfters / nicht öfters an der Hausarbeit beteiligt seit Sie als Tagesmutter arbeiten. Wie oft ist öfters? Ärgert Sie das?

Eltern

Die Literatur über Tagespflege berichtet über Spannungen zwischen Eltern und Tageseltern. Welche Spannungen haben Sie erlebt?

Wie gehen Sie damit um?

Wie läßt sich am besten eine funktionierende Arbeitsbeziehung zwischen Eltern und Tageseltern herstellen?

Wie wichtig ist es sich mit den Eltern anzufreunden?

Glauben Sie, dass Ihre Arbeit von den Eltern geschätzt wird?

An wen wenden Sie sich, wenn Sie Probleme haben?

Einkommen

Rostock erscheint recht außergewöhnlich in seiner Bereitwilligkeit 70 Prozent der Kosten für die Betreuung der Kinder zu übernehmen. Ist das der Fall für alle die Kinder, die Sie betreuen?

Haben Sie schon mal Kinder betreut, wo das Jugendamt sich nicht an den Kosten beteiligt hat?

Was müssen die Eltern dann zahlen?

Wie haben Sie die Entscheidung getroffen, wieviel Essengeld die Eltern täglich zahlen müssen?

Ist das ein Gebiet auf dem Tagesmutter miteinander konkurieren?

Haben Sie jemals Auseinandersetzungen mit den Eltern geführt, bei denen es ums Geld ging?

Sie führen / führen nicht Buch über Ihre Ausgaben und Einnahmen. Warum? Wieviel Zeit verwenden Sie darauf?

Haben Sie schon mal ausgerechnent was Ihnen bleibt, nachdem Sie alle Ausgaben abgezogen haben?

Ist das Geld, dass Sie mit der Tagespflege verdienen für bestimmt Ausgaben im Haushalt vorgesehen?

Geschäft / Beruf

Fühlen Sie sich als Geschäftsfrau?

Halten Sie Tagesmutter für einen Beruf?

Was sind die wichtigsten Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten einer Tagesmutter?

Glauben Sie, es ist möglich, diese zu erlernen, bzw. jemandem beizubringen?

Gibt es da bei Ihnen persönhiche Erfahrungen, die Ihre Arbeit als Tagesmutter pragen?

Was ware die ideale Form einer Tagesmutterausbildung, oder Förderung?

Jugendamt

Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Aufgabe des Jugenamtes bezüglich Ihrer Tatigkeit als Tagesmutter?

Wie gestaltet sich die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Jugendamt?

Sind Sie auch zu Hause besucht worden?

Wenden Sie sich ans Jugendamt, wenn Sie Probleme haben?

Vergangenheit und Zukunft

Noch einmal zeitlich zurück: Als Sie nicht mehr schulpflichtig waren, hatten Sie damals eine Karriere vor Augen? Was ist geschehen?

Was glauben Sie, wie lange wollen Sie als Tagesmutter arbeiten? Wie sehen Sie Ihre Zukunft?

Einige große Abschlußfragen

Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die guten und was sind die schlechten Seiten der Tagesmuttertätigkeit?

Würden Sie Ihre eigenen Kinder von einer Tagesmutter betreuen lassen?

Wie würden Sie reagieren, wenn eines Ihrer Kinder Tagesmutter werden möchte?

Habe ich vergessen Sie nach etwas zu fragen, was Ihrer Meinung nach wichtig ist?

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Offenheit, Zeit ..... Vertraulich...